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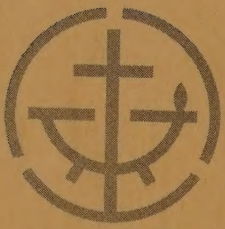

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American Methodism

Its Divisions and Unification

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By

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NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO

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LONDON AND EDINBURGH

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Preface

THE largest ecclesiastical family of the Protestant type in the United States of America is the group of Churches called Methodistic.

Beginning in colonial days, it has, throughout the entire existence of the nation, been in touch with all the stages of national development, and, exerting a marked influence upon all grades of society, it has had a very direct part in molding the national life. While it held strategic positions in the cities, it ministered also to the rural regions, and its pioneer preachers followed those who sought homes in the wilderness, and, by their religious services, they saved the frontier from lapsing into barbarism. It was also a unifying force, as in the colonial days and in other periods of the country's history, its itinerant ministers, like soldiers under orders, moved from one part of the land to another binding the people of the different sections together by a common spiritual bond.

So great has been the influence of Methodism upon the people generally that no one can thoroughly understand the history of the United States who is not fairly familiar with the movements of Methodism from its beginning in this land. As Wesley had much to do in making a new England, across the sea, so his followers on this side the Atlantic have had much to do with the making of the great American Republic.

What is more, State questions were at the same time

Church questions, and especially when the issue was moral or humanitarian. Conditions that affected the nation affected the Church, and both Church and nation had to grapple with the same forces, and the issues common to both Church and State shook both to their foundations, and, in a number of instances, violently rent the ecclesiastical fabric, and made fissures that have never yet been entirely closed.

In view of this interrelationship between the country and the Church, those who wish to comprehend the history of the nation should know something of the history of American Methodism, as those of this ecclesiastical family who would intelligently know the history of their Church must know the history of their country.

At one time the only Methodism in the United States of America was the Methodist Episcopal Church, but, through various causes, there are to-day at least seventeen Methodistic bodies, large and small, in this country, and nearly all of them have sprung from the Methodist Episcopal Church, which continues to exist with a phenomenal growth, and which still is by far the largest of them all.

The history of American Methodism, therefore, includes the history of the divisions and subdivisions coming down from the original body, the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

This book is a presentation of such history covering about a century and a quarter and touching some twenty Methodistic denominations.

As in other human relations, so in ecclesiasticisms, there is the law of action and reaction. From a unity there is a tendency to disunity and division, while on

the other hand there is likely to come a period when the divided parts will be attracted to each other and tend to gravitate to one another or towards the main body. In other words, while there was once a disruptive force, there may come into action a force that will bring the disrupted parts together.

So a study of the causes that produced division and diversity will aid in a consideration of tendencies towards unification.

This work is a study of divisions that have taken place and a consideration of unifications that are proposed and that may or may not be brought about. The book contains history which is interesting in itself, but which has an additional interest because it proposes to present enough of the history of the divisions as to aid in an intelligent consideration of suggestions looking towards forms of unification.

THOMAS B. NEELY.

Philadelphia, Pa., Aug. 1, 1915.

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I

EARLY MOVEMENTS IN AMERICAN METHODISM

THE theme compels a glance at the past, the present, and then into the future of American Methodism. It implies that there have been divisions in what was once a unity, and unity, division, and proposed reunion start many queries.

Thus a consideration of the union of the Methodisms raises the question as to how there happened to be any division, how long the disunion has lasted, and what effort, if any, has been made to bring the divided parts together, or into harmonious relations.

Again, if efforts have been made in the interest of union, who made them, how have the proposals been received, and what has resulted from them?

Predetermined limits, however, will prevent any extended presentation of all these points, important though they are, but at least an outline suggestion should be given.

Wesleyanism, or the Methodism inaugurated by Wesley, began in England, in the first half of the eighteenth century. From its germinal form there was a gradual, though rather rapid development, and in that early British development may be found the principles of polity afterwards brought to greater perfection in other parts of the world.

Wesleyan Methodism came to the English colonies along the Atlantic coast of North America about half-

way between 1760 and 1770. The generally accepted date of its formal beginning in America has been the year 1766, though some claim that the date should be earlier.

The organization at once took deep root and spread throughout the colonies having its government centered in England and in the Reverend John Wesley, its founder. After the independence of these colonies and the formation of the new Republic called the United States of America, certain changes in the organization were necessitated by the changed conditions in the country, and Wesleyan Methodism in the United States was reorganized and more fully developed.

Thus from the Wesleyan Societies in the United States there was evolved an Episcopal Church, but, to show its character and its historic relation, the qualifying word Methodist was prefixed to Episcopal, making the title Methodist Episcopal.

The organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church took place in the month of December, in the year 1784, in the city of Baltimore, Maryland, at what was called the Christmas Conference, because of the season when it convened, and it became the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, or the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, both geographical and national qualifications meaning the same thing then and subsequently, for America as then understood did not mean North America, Central America, or South America, but the portion of the continent known as the United States of America, whose inhabitants then were, and now are, known as Americans.

This Methodist Episcopal Church was then the only Methodist body in the United States.

II

EARLY WITHDRAWALS FROM THE PARENT BODY

WITHDRAWALS from the Methodist Episcopal Church of bodies more or less large began at an early date.

The earliest was towards the close of the year 1791. The leader in this movement was the Reverend William Hammit. Born in Ireland, he had been a member of the English Wesleyan Conference. Later he was a preacher in the West Indies whence he came to the United States and connected himself with the Methodist Episcopal Church, which, then, was in its formative years. He preached in Charleston, South Carolina, New York, and Baltimore, and returned to Charleston where he had begun his work. Here he, and his immediate followers in and around Charleston, dissociated themselves from the Methodist Episcopal Church and started a new body which they called the "Primitive Methodists." This action seems to have been based on the personal convenience of Mr. Hammit, rather than on any ecclesiastical principle or conviction, and the new body soon disappeared.

In 1792, under the Reverend James O'Kelly, one of the powerful leaders of his time, occurred the withdrawal of a considerable number of preachers and people over a question relative to the method of making pastoral appointments. They called themselves "Re-

publican Methodists" but later changed the title to "The Christian Church." They were found chiefly in Virginia. Some historians state that this body perished soon after its organization, but to this day it persists in the locality where it originated, though it never assumed the proportions of a large denomination.

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century certain bodies of colored people went out from the original Church, which was the Methodist Episcopal, and formed denominations composed of members of their own race.

Thus Peter Spencer, a colored man living in Wilmington, in the state of Delaware, having secured orders in 1813 became the leader of a new body composed of colored persons who went out from the Methodist Episcopal Church. Its original chartered title was "The African Union Church," but, after the Civil War, it was called the Union American Methodist Episcopal Church. This colored organization which started in Wilmington, Delaware, spread here and there and continues until the present time though its numbers have never been very great.

In 1816, Richard Allen, a colored man resident in Philadelphia, with his followers, who were people of color, and who had been in the Methodist Episcopal Church, began in that city the African Methodist Episcopal Church which spread far and wide and has grown to be a very considerable religious denomination.

In the city of New York, prior to this period, was a colored Church of the Methodist Episcopal New York Conference, and the Church was called the Zion Church, or the Zion Colored Church. In 1817 these colored people connected with this Zion Church left the Methodist Episcopal Church and originated a new colored

denomination which they called the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, thus preserving the name of the original local Church. This also widely spread and taking firm root has in the course of years become a large body.

The more formidable departures from the parent Church, however, may be said to have begun after the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century and to have been completed about the close of the second quarter. These will be treated in their order and each will present its own peculiarities and have its own particular lessons.

It is to be noted that all the withdrawing bodies of the first seventeen years of the nineteenth century, and also the withdrawal under James O'Kelly, towards the close of the eighteenth century, still continue, and some of them with a very vigorous existence after the lapse of nearly, and in one case, more than, a hundred years.

III

A FOREIGN SEPARATION

THE first separation of great moment in the second quarter of the nineteenth century related to the British province of Canada to the north of the United States of America.

The Methodist Episcopal Church had in the early days extended into Canada as a sort of overflow. Even in that time there was some degree of interchange of population. In 1778, the Emburys and the Heeks, who formed the first church in New York City, founded the first American Methodist Society in Canada. In 1790, George Neal, a local preacher from Pennsylvania, who taught school in Canada, formed another society in that country. About the same time William Losee, an itinerant preacher of the United States, visited some friends in Upper Canada, and while there preached some sermons which made such an impression that the people petitioned the New York Conference for him as their regularly appointed minister. This request was granted and thus a connection was established between an Annual Conference in the United States and the work in Canada, the work across the border being connected with the New York Conference, and, subsequently, with the Genesee Conference in the western part of New York State.

Thus in this unpremeditated way the work of the Methodist Episcopal Church extended across the na-

tional boundary. The work steadily and rapidly spread and the relations between the parts of the Church on both sides the line were most harmonious, but the war of 1812–1814 between the United States and Great Britain, which involved Canada, naturally produced unhappy results. The allegiance of the people of Canada to Great Britain strained their allegiance to the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, a country which had been at war with them. British laws also came in to increase the difficulties of the situation. Hence there grew up a desire for ecclesiastical independence. As Dr. Nathan Bangs, in his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," says: "This desire, however, did not arise out of any dissatisfaction with the conduct of the brethren in the United States towards them, but chiefly from the opposition evinced by statesmen in Upper Canada to their being subject to the control of a foreign ecclesiastical head, over which the civil authorities of Canada could exercise no jurisdiction; and as most of the preachers in Canada were formerly from the United States, and all of them subject to an ecclesiastical jurisdiction in another nation, it was contended by the Canadian authorities that they had no sufficient guarantee for their allegiance to the crown of Great Britain, and to the civil regulations of Canada; and hence the Methodist ministers in Canada had suffered civil disabilities, and had not been allowed to celebrate the rites of matrimony, not even for their own members."

One result of this state of affairs was a greatly reduced membership and an increase of difficulties in the work.

In view of these conditions preachers in Canada pe-

titioned the General Conference of 1824 to set off the upper province as an independent Conference, with the privilege of electing its own bishop to reside among its ministers and members and to superintend its affairs. In response, this General Conference, though not agreeing to all that was asked, did erect Upper Canada into an Annual Conference, but retained it as before under the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the superintendency of its bishops.

This, however, did not satisfy the Canadians, and, in 1828, the Conference of Canada sent a Memorial to the General Conference of that year asking that the Canada Conference be made an independent Church. The Canadian Conference had also in 1824 memorialized the Annual Conferences in the United States to recommend this to the General Conference of 1828.

The matter came before that body and there followed a discussion as to the right and power of the General Conference to grant ecclesiastical independence to the Conference in Upper Canada.

This was opposed by some on constitutional grounds. Dr. Nathan Bangs, one of the leaders in the Church at that time, says in his History that it was held that the General Conference "had no constitutional right to set off the brethren in Upper Canada as an independent body, because the terms of the compact by which we existed as a General Conference made it obligatory on us, as a delegated body, to preserve the union entire, and not to break up the Church into separate fragments. Hence, to grant the prayer of the memorialists, by a solemn act of legislation, would be giving sanction to a principle, and setting a precedent for future General Conferences of a dangerous character—of such a char-

acter as might tend ultimately to the dissolution of the ecclesiastical body, which would be, in fact and form, contravening the very object for which we were constituted a delegated conference, this object being a *preservation*, and not a *destruction* or *dissolution* of the *union*."

Unless some other principle qualified the relationship of the Canadian Conference this view must have stood as final for the General Conference had no right to destroy the Church in whole or in part.

At this juncture, however, John Emory, one of the legal lights of the General Conference, called attention to, and introduced a new principle, or rather one that had been overlooked. As Doctor Bangs says: "It was suggested by a very intelligent member of the General Conference, the late Bishop Emory, that the preachers who went to Canada from the United States went in the first instance as missionaries, and that ever afterwards, whenever additional help was needed, Bishop Asbury and his successors asked for *volunteers*, not claiming the *right* to *send* them, in the same authoritative manner in which they were sent to the different parts of the United States and territories; hence it followed that the compact between us and our brethren in Canada was altogether of a *voluntary* character—*we* had offered them our services, and *they* had accepted them—and therefore, as the time had arrived when they were no longer willing to receive or accept of our labors and superintendence, they had a perfect right to request us to withdraw our services, and we the same right to withhold them."

"This," continues Doctor Bangs, "presented the subject in a new and very clear light, and it seemed per-

fectly compatible with *our* powers as a delegated conference, and *their* privileges as a part of the same body, thus connected by a *voluntary* and *conditional* compact, either expressed or implied, to dissolve the connection subsisting between us, without any dereliction of duty or forfeiture of privilege on either part."

Convinced that the General Conference had a right to grant ecclesiastical independence to its preachers and people in Canada, the General Conference proceeded formally to grant the desired independence. This it did by adopting the following:

"*Whereas*, The Canada Annual Conference, situated in the province of Upper Canada, under a foreign government, have, in their memorial, presented to this Conference the difficulties under which they labor in consequence of their union with a foreign ecclesiastical government, and setting forth their desire to be set off as a separate Church establishment; and,

"*Whereas*, This General Conference disclaims all right to exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction under such circumstances except by mutual agreement; therefore,

"*Resolved*, by the delegates of the Annual Conferences in General Conference assembled: 1. That the compact existing between the Canada Annual Conference and the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States be, and hereby is, dissolved by mutual consent, and that they are at liberty to form themselves into a separate Church establishment," etc.

It will be observed that in its action the General Conference enunciates the principle that the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church can deal differently with territory under a foreign government from territory within the United States of America.

This is distinctly implied and expressed in the paper which was adopted.

There is the distinct statement that the Methodist Episcopal Church in question is not the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, but the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, and from it is distinguished the Canada Annual Conference, and for it to be under the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States was to be under "a foreign ecclesiastical government." On the other hand the Conference in Canada was "under a foreign government."

Being "under a foreign government" it was missionary, and, perhaps, temporary, work outside of the naturally legitimate bounds and jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church in, and of, the United States of America, and with a different bond from the Conferences and fields of action within the United States. Because the Conference in Canada was "under a foreign government," the "Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America" had no "right to exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction" over it "except by mutual agreement," and either side could vacate the "compact" or tacit agreement which was, as Doctor Bangs says, "a voluntary or conditional compact," and also temporary.

Hence, because Canada was "under a foreign government" and the Canada Annual Conference desired "to be set off as a separate Church establishment," the Methodist Episcopal General Conference disclaimed "all right to exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction," declared the compact "dissolved" and that those in the Canadian Conference were "at liberty to form themselves into a separate Church establishment."

Having disclaimed "all right to exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction under such circumstances except by mutual agreement," that is to say, "to exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction over work in territory" under "foreign government" or not in a territory within or under the United States of America, the General Conference acknowledged and established the principle that the status of work under the Methodist Episcopal Church in a foreign country or within the sphere of a foreign government is different from its work in its home land which is the United States of America. The Church is the "Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America" though it may have mission fields in foreign countries. It is in, and of, the United States but it does not have the same grip and control in territory under a foreign political government as it does in the United States. In the foreign territory it may have its more or less temporary control by tolerance, or, using the language of the action in relation to Canada, "by mutual agreement," and, as in the case of Canada, the relation may be severed "by mutual agreement" or by one side or the other. So a Conference in a foreign land might "be set off as a separate Church establishment" or form itself "into a separate Church establishment." In the United States of America, however, the case would be very different. Here the "Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America" could and must enforce its authority over its own work. This territory cannot be withdrawn from it and its General Conference cannot set off territory in the United States, for the General Conference cannot destroy the Church in whole or in part.

So Dr. Nathan Bangs observes in his History,

copyrighted in 1840: "It will be perceived, therefore, that this mutual agreement to dissolve the connection heretofore subsisting between the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and the Canada Conference cannot, with justice, be pleaded for setting off any one Conference or any number of Annual Conferences in the United States, as their relations to each other and to the General Conference are quite dissimilar to that which bound the Canada Conference to us. The Conferences in the United States are all bound together by one sacred compact, and the severing any one from the main body would partake of the same suicidal character as to sever a sound limb from the body. The General Conference has no right, no authority, thus 'to scatter, tear, and slay' the body which they are solemnly bound to keep together, to nourish, to protect, and to preserve in one harmonious whole.

"If an Annual Conference declare itself independent, out of the pale of the Methodist Episcopal Church, it is its own act exclusively, and therefore the responsibility rests upon itself alone, for which the General Conference cannot be held accountable, because it was not a participant in the separation. I do not say that the General Conference may not disown an Annual Conference, should it become corrupt in doctrine, in moral discipline, or in religious practice. Should, for instance, an Annual Conference, by an act of the majority of its members, abjure any of our essential doctrines, such as the atonement of Christ, or justification by faith, or should renounce the sacrament of baptism or the Lord's supper, or strike from its moral code any of the precepts of morality recognized in our general rules, it might become the duty of the General Conference to

interpose its high authority, and cut off or at least to withdraw its fellowship from the offending members. Yet such an act of excision, or of disnaturalization, if I may so call it, could be justified only as a dernier resort, when all other means had failed to reclaim the delinquents from their wanderings—just as the surgeon's knife is to be withheld until mortification endangers the life of the patient, when death or amputation becomes the sole alternative. How else can the Church be preserved—supposing such a case of delinquency to exist—from a general putrefaction? For if a majority of an Annual Conference become heterodox in doctrine, or morally corrupt in practice, the minority cannot control them, cannot call them to an account, condemn, and expel them. And in this case, must the majority of the Annual Conferences, and perhaps also a respectable minority of that very Annual Conference, be compelled to hold these apostates from the truth and righteousness in the bosom of their fellowship, to treat them in all respects as brethren beloved, and publicly to recognize them as such in their public and authorized documents? This would be a hard case indeed! an alternative to which no ecclesiastical body should be compelled to submit.

"These remarks are made to prevent any misconception respecting the principle on which the above connection was dissolved, and to show that it forms no precedent for a dissolution of the connection now subsisting between the Annual and General Conferences in the United States. Analogical arguments, to be conclusive, must be drawn from analogous facts or circumstances, and not from contrast, or opposing facts or circumstances. And the relation subsisting between

the Annual Conferences in the United States to each other, and between them and the General Conference, stands in contrast with the relation which did subsist between the Canada and the General Conference; and therefore no analogical argument can be drawn from the mutual agreement by which this relation was dissolved in favor of dissolving the connection now subsisting between the Annual Conferences in the United States, by a solemn act of legislation on the part of the General Conference, except for the reasons above assigned; and those reasons, let it be remembered, make the contrast still greater between the two acts, and justify the difference of the procedure; for the dissolution of the compact between us and the Canada brethren [was] from the jurisdiction only, Christian fellowship still subsisting—while the supposed act of excision would be a withdrawing of Christian fellowship from the offending members."

The general principles enunciated long years ago by Doctor Bangs were, and are, correct, but perhaps they should have the qualification of a few additional remarks. This is particularly needed in relation to his illustration of the excision or expulsion of an Annual Conference by the General Conference.

An Annual Conference involves not merely members but also territory, for it has territorial boundaries. The essential principle in the facts and statements presented in and illustrated by the granting of independence to the Canada Conference was that the work and the territory in a foreign country could be set off because it was foreign but that Conference territory in the United States of America could not be set off because it was not foreign but in the home territory of the

"Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America."

Then in dealing with ministers in an Annual Conference who would "abjure any of our essential doctrines," "or strike from its moral code any of the precepts of morality recognized in our general rules," the way to deal with "these apostates from truth and righteousness" would be to deal with them individually, and, when they were duly expelled, those who remained would be the Annual Conference and be the custodians of the property as far as an Annual Conference could be the custodian of such property, and if those who were expelled or otherwise ceased to be members of the Annual Conference, undertook to carry off, or take, or hold possession of property deeded and dedicated for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church, it would be the right and duty of the Church through its regularly constitued denominational authorities, or through the individuals who remained true to the doctrines, the polity, and the practices, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to claim and reclaim said property, if necessary, by legal proceedings in the courts of the land.

The individuals might be expelled or excluded, or go out voluntarily, but the territory and the property of the Annual Conference would remain in the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Conference, though with reduced numbers, could continue its existence, or a renewed Conference could be created.

In case the majority of the members of the Conference became "apostate" and would not conduct the Conference according to the law of the denomination and refuse to allow the faithful minority its rights, any individual member of the Conference could appeal to

the General Conference, and if all the ministers in the Conference had proven "apostate" any minister or member of the Church could appeal to the General Conference, or the General Conference itself could take cognizance, or some one could take the matter directly into the civil courts.

The one great principle established by the Canada case is that the status of the work of the Methodist Episcopal Church in a foreign country is different from that in the home land, and, while the General Conference may set off, or make independent or allow to be independent work in a foreign land, it cannot set off, or sever from itself any section, territory, or Conference in the United States of America.

It was on this basis that the General Conference in 1828 granted the independence of its Conference in Canada which was a foreign country.

IV

A WITHDRAWAL ON QUESTIONS OF POLITY

TOWARDS the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century there developed in some sections, with the city of Baltimore as a center, a dissatisfaction with certain features of the economy of the Methodist Episcopal Church or with the practical workings of its polity.

The Annual Conferences were composed of what were called the travelling or itinerant preachers and ministers of this class were the members of the General Conference. The other class of preachers who were members of the local churches and were called local preachers could not be members of the General Conference, and some of them wished their class of local preachers to be represented as such in that body.

Then members of the general laity who were not local preachers declared that they were dissatisfied with certain conditions in the ecclesiastical government and wanted to break down centralization and secure a greater diffusion of power among themselves, by having laymen elected as delegates and admitted as members of the General Conference.

These agitators became known as "reformers." They spoke of themselves as such and by others were referred to as the reformers.

After an agitation of some years the agitators grew to be a considerable number and counted not only lay

supporters but also ministerial participants among whom were some very prominent preachers.

In 1824 a convention of "reformers" was held in Baltimore.

This convention decided to organize what were termed Union Societies in different parts of the country and also to publish a periodical called "The Mutual Rights of the Ministers and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

Persisting in their agitation, charges were made against some of the agitators and, in some instances, the parties were tried and expelled. Possibly if less of this had been done the results would have been better.

In 1827, the Reverend Dennis B. Dorsey, a member of the Baltimore Conference, who had identified himself with the "Reformers," was arraigned before his Conference for commending and circulating the publication called the "Mutual Rights." Dr. Nathan Bangs, in his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," states that "during the course of his trial he avowed such principles, and made such declarations respecting his independent rights as could not be approved by the Conference; and they therefore requested, as the mildest punishment they could inflict, the bishop leave him without an appointment for one year. From this decision he took an appeal to the General Conference; but instead of waiting patiently until this ultimate decision could be had, he loudly censured the acts of the Baltimore Conference in reference to his case, through the columns of 'Mutual Rights,' thus appealing from the constituted authorities of the Church to the popular voice, invoking from this very equivocal tribunal a decision in his favor. All this had a tendency

to widen the breach, and to make a reconciliation the more hopeless."

Shortly after that, eleven local preachers of the city of Baltimore, as Dr. James Porter, in his "History of Methodism," puts it: "who were chief actors in the drama, and twenty-five lay members of the more belligerent kind, were cited to trial, and either expelled or suspended," and they took an appeal.

In 1828, the Reverend Dennis B. Dorsey, who refused to pledge himself to desist from spreading what the Conference regarded as incendiary publications, was excluded from the Church.

In November, 1827, certain expelled members and their sympathizers met in Baltimore, and formed a society called the "Associate Methodist Reformers," and, in the same year, a convention of "Reformers" prepared a memorial to be presented to the next General Conference, which was to meet in 1828, praying for the admission of laymen, as lay-delegates, into the General Conferences of the Church.

This memorial and various petitions were received by the General Conference of 1828. To it also came an appeal from Dennis B. Dorsey. In his case the decision of the Baltimore Conference was affirmed as was also the action of the same Conference in the case of William C. Pool, expelling him on similar grounds, but a paper was presented by John Emory in which it was said:

"That no act or decision of this General Conference is intended, or can justly be so construed, as to deny to any minister or member of the Methodist Episcopal Church any liberty of speech or of the press which shall be consistent with our moral obligations as Christians,

and with our own existing rules and associate obligations as Methodists and Methodist ministers; and that any representation or construction to the contrary will, in our judgment, be a violation of truth and righteousness."

The paper also provided that expelled persons because of such actions as in the cases cited might be restored to their former standing, provided that within six months the individuals "shall make concessions in writing, if required, with regard to their past proceedings, and give such assurances with regard to their future course in relation to the premises as shall be satisfactory to such minister or preacher, and also to such quarterly meeting Conference."

In regard to the memorial on the question of lay-delegation a report presented by Dr. John Emory, but said to have been prepared by Thomas E. Bond, M. D., refusing to grant lay-delegation was adopted unanimously by the Conference, and that was followed by the almost unanimous adoption of another paper which indulged the hope "that a mutual desire may exist for conciliation and peace," advised that no further proceedings be had "on account of any past agency or concern in relation to the above-named periodical, or in relation to any Union Society as above mentioned," and proposing a plan for the easy restoration of any who had been expelled for specified participation in a certain form of agitation.

But these concessions were unavailing. It was too late. The tide had arisen and swept on.

After an agitation continued through a number of years, with an intense discussion on the issue of lay-delegation in the General Conference and also involv-

ing the question of the episcopacy, a number of ministerial and lay agitators and their followers left the Methodist Episcopal Church, and in November, 1830, a General Convention assembled in Baltimore to frame a Constitution and a Book of Discipline for a new denomination and this new denomination they styled the Methodist Protestant Church.

This new denomination was to have lay as well as ministerial delegates in its General Conference.

In addition the name bishop was dropped and the chief executive officer called the President.

The first General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church convened in Georgetown, District of Columbia, on the 6th of May, 1834.

It was proposed that its General Conference meet once in seven years, but it was finally decided to have it meet at intervals of four years, following the example of the Mother Church with its quadrennial General Conferences.

V

SLAVERY A DISTURBING AND DIVISIVE INFLUENCE

IN the nation slavery became an issue between certain sections at a period close to the beginning of the new republic.

Eliminated at an early day from the Northern States, it gradually and steadily strengthened in the Southern States as slave labor became more profitable.

The climate and the crops were favorable to the labor of the colored people and, therefore, though some leaders in the South wished the emancipation of the human beings who were held in servitude, the need of labor, and the commercial gain through that labor, strengthened the demand for human slavery in that section of the country.

The general opinion in the North was against this "peculiar institution," as it was termed, and, as the years passed, the Northern opinion became as pronounced against the institution as in the South it was favorable, though the people had different views as to the method of dealing with it.

With very many, and a vast number that continued to grow, it was not a matter of superficial prejudice but a profound conviction which became a matter of conscience that took possession of men's thoughts and swayed their souls and impelled them to speak, and write, and work against the slavery of human beings no matter what might be the color of their skin.

On the other hand many in the South defended this slavery not only because it was financially profitable but also on other grounds. Some held that it was better for the colored people and even maintained that the institution had divine sanction. So the controlling people in the South, generally speaking, supported slavery and made efforts for its extension.

These counter sentiments asserted themselves in an increasing intensity, the one in the North and the other in the South, so that one became the practical exponent of the North and the other of the South, to such an extent that the tendency was to array the two sections against each other.

With this condition it was inevitable that the slavery question would become a political issue and slavery would mark a dividing line, so that it made two diametrically opposed divisions in the nation, the one pro-slave, the other anti-slave.

That is what resulted, so that, generally, and practically, speaking, there were the Antislavery North, and the Proslavery South, and the North became the synonym of the Antislavery sentiment, and the South an equivalent word for the Proslavery view. Thus there were sectional divisions on this subject that made an actual, though not a legal division, within the nation.

In the territory on the southern edge of the North, and the northern edge of the South, there was a fringe of territory commonly called the " Border," where there were mixed sentiments on the question of slavery, perhaps more mixed and more pronounced than in most other parts of the country.

The slave controversy, however, was more than a

political question which tended to divide the citizens into political parties, for the disturbing and divisive influence of slavery entered into the Churches and tended to divide the religious denominations.

It was maintained that slavery was a moral and religious question and a growing number emphatically declared that the Church should stand not for but against slavery, and that Christians should not hold or favor the holding of human beings in such servitude.

So the question of human slavery developed discussions and differences which increased in intensity in the Church as well as in the nation. Clashes between those of opposite opinions became more and more frequent in the regularly recurring sessions of the superior legislative and executive bodies of the several religious denominations until there were open divisions in sentiment, and divisions in the ecclesiastical relations of the opposing parties became inevitable.

The Methodist Episcopal Church practically began with the birth of the United States of America and spread over the colonies and expanded with the growth of the nation until it covered the entire country.

Slavery was in the land before the Methodist Episcopal Church was founded, and, so, as the Church continued and spread, it was susceptible in a degree to the force of the diverse and changing sentiments of the country on the slave issue.

The controversy was in the North, which was becoming more and more intense in its opposition to slavery, and it was in the South, which was becoming more and more proslave, while it covered the middle section, where the two forces met in mental, political, and, sometimes, physical conflict.

Hence the commotion was felt throughout the whole country and through the march of the generations, and naturally the Church felt the force of the struggle of antagonistic sentiments in the movement which has been styled the "irrepressible conflict."

From its very beginning the Methodist Episcopal Church was pronounced in its opposition to human slavery and the barter in human beings, which the founder of Methodism had denounced as "That execrable sum of all villainies, commonly called the Slave Trade," and its law always declared its opposition in terms of emphatic denunciation.

To show the attitude of the Methodist Episcopal Church from the earliest times a few of its laws may be cited. Thus in the eighties of the eighteenth century one of its General Rules prohibited "The buying or selling the bodies and souls of men, women or children, with an intention to enslave them." About the same time the law declared "that slavery is contrary to the laws of God, man, and nature and hurtful to society." It declared that, after warning, those who bought and sold slaves should be expelled. In 1784 local preachers who held and would not emancipate their slaves were to be tried another year in Virginia, but suspended at once in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, and Travelling Preachers who possessed slaves and refused to manumit them where the law permitted were to be employed no more. In the same year the Conference pronounced against slavery "as contrary to the golden law of God, on which hang all the law and the prophets, and the unalienable rights of mankind, as well as every principle of the Revolution, to hold in the deepest de-

basement, in a more abject slavery than is perhaps found in any part of the world except America, so many souls that are all capable of the image of God," and devised measures "to extirpate this abomination" from those connected with the Church.

After a time, however, while not changing its antagonism, it made some concessions to its members who were supposed to be entangled by peculiar circumstances, but the denomination never yielded its righteous detestation of what it regarded an iniquitous institution even where it was protected by state law.

While for a time conservative in its actions the demand that there should be no tolerance of human slavery anywhere and under any condition became stronger and stronger from the Northern portion of the Church, and many were not only on the anti-slavery side, but were pronounced abolitionists insisting upon the destruction of slavery in some way and that without delay. This meant agitation which not only affected local Churches and Annual Conferences but found its way into General Conference after General Conference.

Thus the question of slavery came up in the General Conferences of 1796, of 1800, of 1804, of 1808, of 1816, and of 1824. Then the question of lay delegation absorbed attention for a while, but in 1836 the question of slavery became a leading topic and in the General Conference of 1840 it became the topic of chief interest, and so it went on until it culminated in 1844.

The Methodist Protestant Church was mainly in the border-land where the slave and antislave sentiments met, though its Conferences also spread to the North and West and into the remoter South. Organized in

1830 it was not long before it began to feel the force of the antagonistic elements. Within a few years the Methodist Protestant Church found how difficult it was to preserve harmony within itself because of the growing proslavery and antislavery sentiments in its section and among its members, and, as the struggle went on, it soon felt the disruptive tendency of the warring elements.

In only its second General Conference, which was held in 1838, there was an acrimonious debate on the question of human slavery, and there was great excitement. This General Conference was held in the city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, May 15, 1838.

Doctor Drinkhouse says: "The Slavery Question could not be suppressed at this Conference. Held in the West, with a majority of the delegates antislavery in sentiment, a deep, underlying conviction in the opposite sections that it would not be left where the Church Constitution had put it; a civil as well as moral question that could not be settled by Church legislation; and above all the pressure of the abolitionists, so-called, upon the more conservative antislavery element of the free states, precipitated action of some sort, to satisfy if possible the manifestoes against the Southern institution."

Asa Shinn, one of the members of the Conference, said, in the *Christian Witness*, a Baptist paper, referring to an action of this General Conference: "The Committee [Brown, Chairman] reported against slavery; and the subject matter of their report was discussed in open Conference for two days, in the presence of a large number of intelligent spectators. This was all clear gain to the cause of truth and righteousness, and

was of itself of more value, probably, than any other official action of the Conference. We at first desired an *official testimony* of the General Conference against slavery. But the resolution leaving the matter, for the present, with the Annual Conferences, and with the people in their primary assemblies, will, it is thought, promote the cause of liberty more than would such official testimony at the present time, and in the present state of the public mind." He also said: "Every man in the nation must take his stand on the side of liberty or on the side of slavery. The signs of the times are portentous, and will become more so. The day is approaching when every man will find that he *cannot* occupy neutral ground before the full power of the storm appears. The liberty of the world and the happiness of the human race are at stake. At such a time and in such a contest *indecision would be imbecility, and cowardice would be a crime.* Almighty God is on the side of righteousness and freedom."

Referring to the day when the compromise which sent the question "to the Annual Conferences and the primary assemblies of the people for decision," Dr. George Brown says: "That night we had a session in view of acting on the report of the Committee on the Church paper. That report being read, Doctor Armstrong of Tennessee offered a resolution to the effect that all matter on the subject of slavery be excluded from its columns. Then followed one of the most excoriating discussions that I ever remember to have heard in any deliberative body on the subject of slavery. Judge H—— of Ohio did battle for the South. . . . Shinn then replied to the whole in a speech of great power."

Continuing, Doctor Brown says: "All this time the discussion proceeded upon the supposition that the General Conference had full power over the question at issue" until he reminded the Conference that Article X. of the Constitution of the Church settled the matter. This read: "No rule shall be passed infringing on the liberty of speech, or of the press," and Doctor Brown said: "The press with us is constitutionally free, and this body has no power to make it otherwise." Then Doctor Armstrong withdrew his resolution and a compromise was adopted, and, as Doctor Brown states: "It was now conceded that the freedom of the press implied that at least all official documents must be published, while communications by individuals should come under the editor's discretionary control."

Doctor Brown further remarks that: "On the following Monday Thomas H. Stockton was elected editor of our free Church paper. In view, therefore, of the premises, Brother Stockton went on to Baltimore, to enter upon the duties of his office. But on his arrival he had the mortification to find that on the slave question the Book Committee, right in the teeth of the Constitution, and over the action of the General Conference, had gagged our Church paper."

Doctor Stockton, therefore, declined to fill the chair under such circumstances, and the Book Committee elected Eli Yeates Reese to be the editor, and, as Doctor Brown says: "He filled his position with ability, but alas for him and for us all, in a free country and in a free Church he edited a gagged paper."

The General Conference of 1842 was well-nigh overwhelmed with numerous memorials on the slave question, with resolutions on the same subject from at least

eight Annual Conferences. Doctor Drinkhouse says: "No one can doubt the serious nature of the question as they present it. . . . Scanning these signatures, you are impressed with the uncompromising opposition of the persons—free from sin themselves, they could not and would not suffer sin upon their Southern brethren. They rebuke it in no measured terms. There must be action, immediate action for emancipation; the consequences are not considered to the unfortunate holders of slaves forbidden to free them by the civil law. And yet but eight or nine of the twenty Conferences and less than five hundred signers to the thirteen or more memorials made this demand."

This Doctor Drinkhouse wrote years later in view of the papers which he examined. He was not a member of that General Conference but had access to the records. The resolutions and memorials were sent to a special committee and from it came majority and minority reports which were discussed for several days, and all were displaced by a compromise resolution as follows:

"*Resolved*, That in the judgment of this General Conference the holding of slaves is not under all circumstances a sin against God; yet in our opinion, under some circumstances it is sinful, and in such cases should be discouraged by the Methodist Protestant Church. The General Conference does not feel authorized by the Constitution to legislate on the subject of slavery; and by a solemn vote we present to the Church our judgment, that the different Annual Conferences, respectively, should make their own regulations on this subject, so far as authorized by the Constitution."

This was adopted by a vote of twenty-three to twenty, a majority of only three, most of the affirmative vote being from the South and most of the negative from the North. Then various groups made written protests against the action, and there was one paper in its support. The able Alexander McCaine defended American Domestic Slavery, basing his arguments on the Sacred Scriptures, while Shinn, Stockton and others answered McCaine, and as Doctor Drinkhouse observes, "much severity of speech being indulged at times on both sides, and the reading of the manuscript minutes shows into what a sad plight the struggling Church was brought by this agitation," and, he remarks, "The extremists returned to their homes only to renew the contention."

This compromising action in the Conference, which looked like an evasion of the issue, was unsatisfactory to many, and the same historian tells us that: "Meantime as the result not a few persons in the North and West, dissatisfied with the outcome of the General Conference action, withdrew from the Church and allied themselves with the Wesleyan Methodists, or stood aloof altogether. The strain upon the youthful organization grew more tense as the months rolled on, and antislavery as a political force received accretion of numbers and increased momentum, stimulated by a like condition of things in the old Church, now arranging itself in sections on the same question."

The slavery question came to the front again in the General Conference of 1846. A lay-member from Michigan proposed the following: "*Resolved*, That the Conference declare slavery, or slaveholding, to be sin-

ful in all its relations, and that no Conference shall be bound to hold fellowship with any Conference that sustains slavery."

A layman from Pittsburgh offered the following: "*Resolved*, That this Conference regard the efforts of Abolitionists, and all other attempts to interfere with the slave question, as improper, on the part of a religious body, and an unwarrantable disturbance of the regulations of the civil government."

These resolutions embodied the views of both sides. It was also known that the South Carolina Conference had passed a series of resolutions indorsing slavery and commending Alexander McCaine's "Defense of Slavery from the Scriptures," which had been published in pamphlet form.

Again a compromise resolution almost identical with that adopted by the preceding General Conference was presented, as follows:

"*Resolved*, That in the judgment of this General Conference, the holding of slaves is, under many circumstances, a sin against God, and, in such cases, should be condemned by the Methodist Protestant Church; nevertheless, it is our opinion that under some circumstances it is not sinful. This General Conference does not feel itself authorized by the Constitution to legislate on the subject of slavery, and by a solemn vote we present to the Church our judgment that the different Annual Conferences, respectively, should make their own regulations on this subject so far as authorized by the Constitution."

This was adopted. Whereupon protests were offered but it was voted to permit no more references to the subject during the remainder of the session. Thus

again was the direct issue avoided in the General Conference by a compromise action.

It is also stated that the Conference laid on the table a resolution that declared that "the practice of buying or selling men, women, or children, with the intention of enslaving them or of holding them in slavery, where emancipation is practicable, is an offense condemned by the word of God."

In 1847 the Genesee Conference by resolution asked the other Conferences to unite with it in a call for a convention to legislate upon the subject of slavery and to blot slaveholding from the Church. To this the Muskingum Conference responded that it did not feel implicated in the sin of slavery, though convinced of its moral wrong; that to accede to the request would result in a division of the Church; and that it would not further the cause of emancipation. But as Doctor Drinkhouse remarks: "As the years passed by and the political power of the antislavery party augmented, it was found impossible to adhere to such conservative ground in the West and North."

In 1849, the Michigan Conference refused to elect representatives to the General Conference which was to meet the next year, "thus ridding themselves of complicity with slavery," as they interpreted their action.

In the General Conference of 1850 there was a memorial asking that "a more definite expression be given upon the sinfulness of slavery . . . and that the extent of the power of the Annual Conference to legislate on the subject be defined." This memorial, which came from a circuit in the Pittsburgh Conference, was referred to a committee which reported that

the General Conference had no jurisdiction; that it did not "think that the General Conference should assume the right to expound the Discipline to the Annual Conferences; but that each Annual Conference is the judge of such matters as are referred to it by the Constitution, respectively for themselves, and are only held responsible to the General Conference, when, in their judgment, they shall have passed 'rules and regulations' contravening the Constitution," and this report was adopted.

The General Conference of 1854 passed the following:

"First, resolved, in the opinion of this General Conference, that the holding of men, women, or children in a state of involuntary servitude, for the purpose of gain, where the civil law will admit of emancipation, and where the interest of the slave would be promoted thereby, is a violation of the morality of the Christian Scriptures. Second, resolved that, according to the Constitution of the Methodist Protestant Church, taking the word of God for the rule, the local judiciary, and not the General Conference, is the proper tribunal by which all questions of morality, bearing upon the standing of members of the Methodist Protestant Church, should be determined."

All these compromises merely preserved the General Conferences from a definite decision on the slave question and left the matter open for the Annual Conferences, and for individuals, to judge and decide for themselves, and this act of 1854 was full of loopholes allowing the escape of any who desired to evade the issue.

The effect was simply avoidance and repression, but

the repression meant an ultimate explosion. As one wrote:

"There grew up a demand for utter separation. The brethren in the free states were twitted upon their continued official relation to Conferences in the slave states; and in more extreme sections some of the Conferences seriously decreased in numbers owing to this cause. The wisest and most conservative men yielded to the infection. . . . And now these brethren took up the question of 'a peaceful separation' from the East and South. It was illegitimate business, but a number of the Conferences having instructed their delegates to consider it, an advisory committee of one from each Conference was appointed to 'propose suitable action in the case.'"

This committee reported that: "In our opinion, the advantages derived from our relation to the General Conference, as now constituted, are overbalanced by the disadvantages arising from it," and suggested that "as we cannot hope for reasonable permanent harmony," the question arises as to whether "the peace and interests of both the Southern and Northern Conferences will not be promoted by a peaceful separation." It further recommended the several Annual Conferences in the North and West to "clothe their representatives with conventional powers, and instruct them to meet in the city of Cincinnati, O., on the second Wednesday of November, 1857, and then and there determine whether they will attend the General Conference, to be held at Lynchburg, Va., in May, 1858, or whether they will take measures for the organization of a General Conference embracing only Annual Conferences opposed to the system of American slavery."

Says the historian:

"The knotty problem with them was: How to separate and not secede. The former they must do; the latter they repudiated. It was Scylla or Charybdis."

The Convention did meet in Cincinnati on the 11th of November, 1857, and adopted a memorial setting forth their grievances as antislavery men and demanding modifications in the Constitution and Book of Discipline, and, among other things, that the proviso understood as insuring civil protection to slave dealers and slaveholders be stricken out; and that a clause be inserted making voluntary slaveholding and slave dealing a bar to membership in the Church. The Convention also asked that a call be made for a Convention, in May, 1859, to make these changes, and added that "if this General Conference shall not see good to adopt action necessary to remove our difficulties, we cannot conscientiously consent to a further continuance of our ecclesiastical connection."

The General Conference of 1858 recommended to the Annual Conferences to call a Convention. This "General Convention of Delegates from the Northern and Western Conferences of the Methodist Protestant Church" was called and it met in Springfield, Ohio, November 10–16, 1858.

It was declared that the late General Conference was "a legal nullity" and the Convention adopted a paper the gist of which is as follows:

"Therefore, resolved, that indisputable facts, the inductions of sound logic, the dictates of Christian prudence, and an enlightened sense of our duty to God and man, justify and warrant this Convention, in

the name of the several Annual Conferences herein represented, to now declare all official connection, co-operation, and official fellowship with and between said Conferences, and such Conferences and Churches, within the Methodist Protestant Association, as practice or tolerate slaveholding and slave trading, as specified in said Memorial, to be suspended until the evil of slavery complained of be removed; and they agree to put back the general interests, and work with their brethren of the West and North in sustaining them under the Constitution."

This was a conditional suspension of relationship but, as Doctor Drinkhouse says: "In the East and South these proceedings, taken together, were declared a secession from the Methodist Protestant Church. The continental character of the denomination was broken, and each section went on its way striving, under serious disabilities, to overcome the local besetments and obstructions with which they were environed."

Thus the disturbing and divisive force of American slavery is illustrated in the division of the Methodist Protestant Church, but thirteen years before this action Southern Conferences had withdrawn from the original Mother Church. In this case the withdrawal was by those who adhered to slavery, while in the Methodist Protestant Church the withdrawal was by those opposed to slavery.

Indeed every great Church with a continental spread in the United States, or a jurisdiction throughout the nation, was divided by slavery excepting the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Episcopal Churches.

VI

A NORTHERN WITHDRAWAL

IT is simply a chronological fact that a couple of years after the formation of the Methodist Protestant Church the movement for the abolition of American slavery began to assume an organized form.

In 1832 the New England Antislavery Society was organized, and the next year was started the American Antislavery Society. This was organized in the city of Philadelphia, in 1833, and at the organizing convention were sixty-three abolitionists from eleven states of the Union, and among them were William Lloyd Garrison and the poet, John Greenleaf Whittier, the latter being one of the secretaries.

This Convention prepared and published a declaration which recited the wrongs and sufferings of the slaves. It declared that "in view of the civil and religious privileges of this nation, the guilt of its oppression" was "unequalled by any other on the face of the earth," "that every American citizen who retains a human being in involuntary bondage is a man-stealer; . . . that the slaves ought to be instantly set free; . . . that all those laws which are now in force admitting the right of slavery are, before God, utterly null and void." It admitted "the sovereignty of each state to legislate exclusively on the subject of slavery within its limits," but maintained that the United States Congress had "a right to suppress the

domestic slave-trade between the states, and to abolish slavery in the territories," and that it was the duty of the people of the free states "to remove slavery by moral and political action, as prescribed in the Constitution of the United States."

The Antislavery movement was now organized and at once gained great momentum. Many rallied to its support so that the American Society alone, in the year 1835, expended thirty thousand dollars or more in its propaganda, issued one million publications, employed fourteen lecturing agents, and organized over five hundred auxiliary societies.

The agitation was decidedly pronounced and the excitement became more and more intense. The Churches participated and while the nation was shaken politically, the people of different denominations were moved by the moral aspects of the questions involved.

About the same time that the American Antislavery Society was formed, there was organized in New York City the first Methodist Episcopal abolition society. That was in 1833. At the organization, La Roy Sunderland presided. Bishop Hedding was elected permanent president but declined to serve. In 1835 the New England Conference organized an antislavery society which advocated the immediate and unconditional abolition of slavery, and the same year the New Hampshire Conference formed a similar society. The overwhelming sentiment is indicated in the fact that out of the sixteen delegates elected to the General Conference by these two Annual Conferences, fourteen of them were outspoken abolitionists.

The General Conference of 1836 was a disappointment to the extreme abolitionists in the Church. Indi-

viduals in the body spoke strongly against the agitation, one saying that abolitionism was "an unhallowed flame that has burned to the destruction of both whites and blacks," and one distinguished man from the South, John Early, said: "Let the Methodists from Maine to Georgia come out and denounce Abolitionists, and it will place the Methodist Episcopal Church on an eminence that it never had before."

The abolitionists formed a small minority in the General Conference, but they had a voice, and their leader was Orange Scott, of the New England Conference. He replied to the other side, and, among other things, said: "The Methodist Episcopal Church has an unholy alliance with slavery; she ought not, therefore, give herself any peace until she cleanses her skirts from blood-guiltiness. Shall the dearest interests of undying millions be sacrificed upon the altar of the peace of the Church? . . . The die is cast. The days of the captivity of our bondmen are numbered. Their redemption is written in heaven."

It was a masterly address, for Mr. Scott was both a logician and an orator, and, particularly, when he had a theme that moved him, and deeply moved he was, notwithstanding his marked self-possession.

John G. Whittier, who was both poet and abolitionist, thus describes him as he appeared on another occasion:

"We had listened with intense interest to the thrilling eloquence of George Thompson, and Henry B. Stanton had put forth one of his happiest efforts. A crowded assembly had been chained to their seats for hours. It was near ten o'clock in the evening. A pause ensued; the audience became unsettled, and many

were moving towards the door purposing to retire. A new speaker arose. He was a plain-looking man, and seemed rather to hesitate in the few observations he first offered. An increasing disposition to listen evidently encouraged him, and he became animated and lively, eliciting demonstrations of applause. Spurred on by this, he continued with increasing interest evident on the part of his hearers, who now resigned themselves willingly to his powerful appeals, responding at short intervals in thunders of applause. To many his illustrations were new and startling. I never can forget the masterly manner in which he met the objection that abolitionists were blinded by prejudice and working in the dark. 'Blind though we be,' he remarked, 'aye, sir, though blind as Samson in the temple of Dagon, like him, if we can do no more, we will grope our way along, feeling for the pillars of that temple which has been consecrated to the bloody rites of the Moloch Slavery; and, grasping at their base, we will bend forward, nerved by the omnipotence of truth, and, o'erturning the supports on which this system of abomination rests, upheave the entire fabric, whose undistinguishable ruins shall yet mark the spot where our grandest moral victory was proudly won.' The climax was complete; the applause was unbounded as the speaker retired. Upon inquiry, we heard the name of O. Scott, now so well known among the ablest advocates of the slave's cause."

The General Conference of 1836 refused to disapprove of slavery, passed resolutions condemning abolitionism, and disclaiming "any right, wish, or intention to interfere in the civil and political relation between master and slave as it exists in the slaveholding

states of this Union," and also disapproving, in the most unqualified sense, the conduct of the two members of the General Conference who are reported to have lectured in this city (Cincinnati) recently, upon and in favor of modern abolitionism."

Some Annual Conferences in the North and West by resolutions pronounced against the abolitionist agitation, and in some Conferences candidates for the ministry were rejected and some members were suspended from the ministry because of their abolition activity.

Nevertheless the antislavery sentiment grew and the activity of the abolitionists within the Church greatly increased.

To the General Conference of 1840 were sent memorials asking for antislavery action. In response to an address from the British Wesleyan Conference, the General Conference referred to the right of the several states to pass diverse laws on the subject of slavery, and that it would be wrong for the Church to enact a rule in opposition to the constitution and laws of the state on this subject, but there was no direct action on the slave issue or upon abolitionism.

Taken altogether the action and non-action of the General Conference of 1840 were unsatisfactory to the extreme antislavery agitators in the North, and, perhaps, almost equally unsatisfactory to the extremists in the Southern part of the Church.

That the conservative action of the General Conferences and the correspondingly conservative actions of certain officials were not encouraging to the extreme antislavery element in the North was soon demonstrated by manifestations of disaffection that speedily

showed themselves, and the danger of a schism could not be disguised.

It was true that the General Rules of the Church prohibited "The buying and selling of men, women, and children, with an intention to enslave them," and that the Book of Discipline contained a Section on Slavery beginning with the question: "What shall be done for the extirpation of the evil of slavery?" and that the law said: "We declare that we are as much as ever convinced of the great evil of slavery: therefore no slaveholder shall be eligible to any official station in our Church hereafter, where the laws of the state in which he lives will admit of emancipation, and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom," and that the law also said that "When any travelling preacher becomes an owner of a slave or slaves, by any means, he shall forfeit his ministerial character in our Church, unless he execute, if it be practicable, a legal emancipation of such slaves, conformably to the laws of the state in which he lives."

Strong as this was regarded to be under existing conditions it was not sufficient to satisfy and pacify the aroused antislavery element in certain Northern sections. The abolitionists wanted something more drastic and wanted it without delay.

Defeated and discouraged quite a number prepared to leave the Methodist Episcopal Church. In about a year after the General Conference of 1840, or, to be more exact, on the 13th of May, 1841, a body under the title of Wesleyan Methodists was organized in Michigan. It was a small organization but it was the beginning of a stream that would increase in volume. In two years its reports showed seventeen stationed

preachers, nine circuits, and 1,116 members. Movements were springing up and streams were forming in other localities. Numbers withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church. Some went into other denominations, while many who withdrew remained for a time undecided as to whether they should form a new Church, and, as Doctor Matlack observed, "stood waiting in expectation of a secession of the main body of the Abolitionists."

The Reverend Orange Scott, on account of ill health, retired to Newbury, Vermont, but, during the winter of 1840–41, he wrote occasional articles for the press. Doctor Matlack, his biographer, tells us that in some of these articles he "deprecated his own past conduct of conducting the antislavery controversy." Mr. Scott himself declared: "I have no hope that any improvement will take place in regard to Church government, and that there is no alternative but to submit to things pretty much as they are, or secede. I have never yet felt prepared for the latter, but my opinion is that those who cannot conscientiously submit to Methodist economy and usages had better peaceably leave."

However he was urged to secede, to prepare a plan of Church government, and to call a Convention, and in 1842 he announced a change of opinion and purpose, and, with Jotham Horton and La Roy Sunderland, published a withdrawal from the Methodist Episcopal Church, and announced a Convention to prepare for a new Church organization which would be free from slavery and non-episcopal in polity.

This Convention was held in Utica, New York, on the 31st of May, 1843, and at it was formed "The Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America." This

new denomination retained much of the polity of the Methodist Episcopal Church, such as the General, Annual, and Quarterly Conferences, thus maintaining the connectional principle. The old general rule was modified so as to read: "Buying or selling of men, women, or children with the intention to enslave them, or holding them as slaves, or claiming that it is right so to do," and their eighth Article of Religion read: "We are required to acknowledge God as our only supreme ruler, and all men are created by Him equal in all natural rights. Wherefore, all men are bound so to order all their individual and social and political acts as to render to God entire and absolute obedience, and to secure to all men the enjoyment of every natural right, as well as to promote the greatest happiness of each in the possession and exercise of such rights."

The whole number who gave in their adhesion at the beginning of this new ecclesiastical organization was nearly six thousand, including twenty-two ministers from the Methodist Episcopal Church, with as many more from the "Protestant" and "Reformed Methodists" who were present at the Convention. These, with twice as many more who reported by letter, were divided into six Annual Conferences, and, at the first General Conference, which was held eighteen months later, there was reported a total membership of fifteen thousand.

Thus there came about a Northern withdrawal from the Methodist Episcopal Church when, in 1843, a large number of ministers and members, particularly in the northeastern section of the country, who felt that the Methodist Episcopal General Conference was not sufficiently pronounced in its antagonism to slaveholding,

and not sufficiently prompt in dealing with slaveholders within the Church, withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church and formed another Church which they called "The Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America," which body was based mainly on opposition to the enslavement of human beings.

This departure was supposed to have carried off the very pronounced abolition element, composed of those who were most radical in their utterances and actions, and to have practically removed the divisive issue from the ensuing General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which was to meet the next year, but this prognostication proved to be incorrect.

VII

THE SOUTHERN WITHDRAWAL

A LITTLE before the middle of the last century occurred the largest withdrawal. In 1844 the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which met in the city of New York, found that, notwithstanding the withdrawal the preceding year of a large number of ministers and laymen of a decidedly antislavery type, who formed the Wesleyan Methodist Connection, the antislavery sentiment in the Methodist Episcopal Church had greatly gained in strength.

As a result there had come about throughout the Church a great collision in sentiment between the two opposing elements on the slavery question, and this conflict culminated in the General Conference of 1844.

As the country was growing and the opposing opinions were rapidly developing, an immediate conflict between the two sides appeared to be inevitable, but the particular occasion for the strife and struggle in the Church at that moment was the fact that one of the bishops of the Church who resided in the South had become an owner of slaves, through his marriage with a lady who owned slaves and who brought them with her to her husband.

Heretofore no bishop of the Church had in this, or any other, way owned slaves, but now, when, in this case for the first time, slavery and the episcopate were

directly connected, and the fact became known among the strong opponents of human slavery in the General Conference, there was intense feeling, and an issue was created on which the members of the Conference sharply divided in their judgment, their deliverances, and their decision.

The General Conference of 1844 considered and discussed the matter for a long time, and finally pronounced against slaveholding by a bishop, and declared that Bishop James O. Andrew, the bishop in question, ought to desist from the exercise of the functions of his episcopal office until he relieved himself from this impediment of slaveholding, which the majority held unfitted him for presiding in all the Annual Conferences.

On this point there has been an erroneous impression. Indeed there has been an oft-repeated assertion that the General Conference deposed Bishop Andrew from the episcopate, but, notwithstanding the prevalence and persistence of this, or an equivalent, notion the supposition is incorrect and the contrary is the fact.

The record shows that the General Conference did not deprive Bishop Andrew of his episcopate, and it did not even suspend him from his office.

All that the Conference did was to pass what was called the Finley substitute, which read as follows:

"*Resolved*, That it is the sense of this Conference that he desist from the exercise of this office so long as this impediment remains," and this was adopted by a vote of 110 yeas to 68 nays.

In the resolution there was not a word about deposition or even suspension. It did express the sense, or opinion, of the body that he ought to desist from ex-

ercising his episcopal functions until he ceased to be a slaveholder—that *he* ought, as though the matter was left to him and he was to act voluntarily—and the resolution was so phrased, that the moment he freed himself from the impediment by giving up his slaveholding connection with human slavery, that very moment he was free, under the resolution of the General Conference, and without any objection, to perform all the functions of the episcopal office of which he had never been deprived.

Not only did the General Conference not depose or suspend Bishop Andrew, but it continued to recognize him as one of its bishops, directed that his name as such should appear in the list of bishops printed in the hymn-book and the Book of Discipline, his support was provided for in the regular way, and as to the work he might do that was left to himself. The exact resolution as to his activities reads thus: "That whether in any, and if any, in what work, Bishop Andrew be employed, is to be determined by his own decision and action, in relation to the previous action of this Conference in his case."

It is to be noted that the leading Southern delegates voted for this resolution and the resolutions covering the listing of Bishop Andrew's name, and the provision for his salary.

All these things show that the General Conference of 1844 did not depose or suspend Bishop Andrew, and it has been held that, as far as any legal effect of its action was concerned, the Bishop could have gone on with his episcopal work though the Conference had expressed the opinion that he ought not to do so until he ceased to be a slaveholder.

Delegates chiefly from the Southern Annual Conferences entered a formal protest against the action of the General Conference in the case of Bishop Andrew. The protest is a lengthy document and in it the signers said:

"We *protest* against the act, because we recognize in this General Conference no right, power, or authority, ministerial, judicial, or administrative, to suspend or depose a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, or otherwise subject him to any official disability whatever, without the formal presentation of a charge or charges, alleging that the bishop to be dealt with has been guilty of the violation of some law, or at least some disciplinary obligation of the Church, and also upon conviction of such charge, after due form of trial."

To the "Protest" the General Conference made a formal, and somewhat lengthy reply, in which the action of the Conference was defended on various grounds, and, in answer to the specific point in the "Protest," the Conference said: "The action of the General Conference was neither judicial nor punitive. It neither achieves nor intends a deposition, nor so much as a legal suspension. Bishop Andrew is still a bishop; and should he, against the expressed sense of the General Conference, proceed in the discharge of his functions, his official acts would be valid."

This clearly established the episcopal status of Bishop Andrew, that he had not been deposed or suspended but still was a bishop who could exercise his powers if he pleased, though the General Conference, partly for prudential reasons, thought he ought not to do so until he ceased to be a slaveholder.

Such a statement was calculated, one might think, to

satisfy those who had signed the "Protest" but there was something beyond the issue in regard to the bishop. The broad issue was the slave question. It was becoming the great issue in the nation and in the Church as well, and it was becoming a sectional issue.

The Southern delegates continued in the General Conference until the final adjournment but they were not satisfied, and, immediately after the close of the Conference, they communicated with their constituents in the South in a strongly phrased address.

The agitation went on and about a year after the adjournment of the General Conference of 1844, namely, in May of 1845, thirteen of the Conferences in the farther South withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church, their withdrawal being a protest against the action of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1844 in regard to Bishop James O. Andrew and, in defense of their slaveholding bishop, they formed a new denomination, which, as indicative of its locality, they called "The Methodist Episcopal Church, South."

There was, however, a broader consideration and that was the identity of their section at that time with human slavery. Evidently that fact had great influence in determining the withdrawal.

At this point and this time we attempt no argument either *pro* or *con*, but simply state admitted or self-evident facts.

Much, however, might be said about the trying circumstances, political, social, legal, and economic, of that exciting period, with human slavery recognized and practically everywhere in the South, while in the North there was an overwhelming and growing antag-

onism to this so-called "peculiar institution." The conditions were such that intense feeling was easily aroused, while the excitement was calculated to confuse thought and multiply perplexities and interfere with calmness in action. This, however, is not the place for discussion along this line. We merely give the history.

The fact now to be kept in mind is that the said thirteen Southern Conferences withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church and formed another Methodist Episcopal Church in and for the South, and as a distinguishing title called it The Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The new body started on its career in the South while the old and original "Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America" continued on its way.

The occasion and the cause of the withdrawal was human slavery.

Before the close of the General Conference of 1844 Southern delegates indicated a withdrawal in a paper called the "Declaration," which they presented.

This Declaration clearly shows that the cause for the threatened separation from the Methodist Episcopal Church was the existence of slavery, and the mental attitude of the slaveholding states, including the people therein who adhered to slavery and who dominated the Southern section.

Thus the Declaration of Southern delegates in 1844 said:

"The delegates of the Conferences in the slaveholding states take leave to *declare* to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church that the continued agitation of the subject of slavery and abolition in a portion of the Church, and the fre-

quent action on that subject in the General Conference and especially the extra-judicial proceedings against Bishop Andrew, which resulted, on Saturday last, in the virtual suspension of him from his office as Superintendent, must produce a state of things in the South which renders a continuance of the jurisdiction of this General Conference over these Conferences inconsistent with the success of the ministry in the slaveholding states."

The reasons in this Declaration for leaving the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church are, first, the existence of slavery; second, that their work is in slaveholding states; third, the "agitation of the subject of slavery and abolition in a portion of the Church"; fourth, the frequent action on that subject in the General Conference; and, fifth, the action in the case of Bishop Andrew.

All through this recital runs the fact of slavery, and adherence to human slavery, as against the opposition to such slavery. It was manifestly involved in the case of Bishop James O. Andrew for the objection made to him was that he had become a slaveholder.

As to whether the consideration of his case was an "extra-judicial proceeding," or whether the action, as he was not under charges and was not tried, an "extra-judicial proceeding," did not alter the main fact, for it was because of slavery and slaveholding that he had any special consideration at all. Further, as a matter of legal fact, he was not suspended in any sense.

The Declaration plainly shows that the existence of slavery was the reason for the threatened withdrawal and the actual withdrawal of certain Southern Conferences.

In the other paper called "The Protest," the minority representing thirteen Southern Conferences repeated the characterization of the action of the General Conference in the case of Bishop James O. Andrew, and in it said, quoting more fully: "We protest against the act of the majority in the case of Bishop Andrew, as extra-judicial to all intents and purposes, being both without law, and contrary to law. We protest against the act, because we recognize in this General Conference no right, power, or authority, ministerial, judicial, or administrative, to suspend or depose a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, or otherwise subject him to any official disability whatever, without the formal presentation of a charge or charges, alleging that the bishop to be dealt with has been guilty of the violation of some law, or at least some disciplinary obligation of the Church, and also upon conviction of such charge, after due form of trial."

To this the General Conference made a "Reply" in which it said: "The transaction which had brought such distress upon the Church, and threatened such extensive ruin, was dealt with merely as a fact—as a practical difficulty—for the removal or palliation of which it was the duty of the General Conference to provide. . . . The action of the General Conference was neither judicial nor punitive. It neither achieves nor intends a deposition, nor as much as a legal suspension. Bishop Andrew is still a bishop; and should he, against the expressed sense of the General Conference, proceed in the discharge of his functions, his official acts would be valid."

In regard to the threatening division the General Conference in its "Reply" said:

"When all the law, and the facts in the case shall have been spread before an impartial community, the majority have no doubt that they *will* fix '*the responsibility of division*,' should such an unhappy event take place, 'where in justice *it belongs*.' They will ask, Who first introduced slavery into the Episcopacy? And the answer will be, *Not the General Conference.* Who opposed the attempt to withdraw it from the Episcopacy? *Not the General Conference.* Who resisted the measure of peace that was proposed—the mildest that the case allowed? *Not the majority.* Who first sounded the knell of division, and declared that it would be impossible longer to remain under the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church? *Not the majority.*"

On the other hand, in view of the general facts, as they were viewed by the Southern delegates, there was something in their contention that their connection with an antislavery Church would interfere with their work in the South where slavery dominated.

To remain in the Church would be to be ruled by a body which was strongly, and increasingly, antislavery in sentiment and action. They would be compelled to conform to the rules and regulations and if they conformed then they would become unpopular, unacceptable, and undesirable in the South where they lived and in which section slavery was paramount.

On that point the Southern delegates stated a plain fact. There was an "irrepressible conflict" and their section was mainly on one side, as the section from which the majority delegates came was overwhelmingly on the other.

Living among slaveholders the Southern delegates

could be more popular, have more influence, and secure what was called greater success if they were pro-slavery, or, at least, not antislavery in their sentiments. On the other hand, if they stood for the sentiments of the Methodist Episcopal Church and remained in the South they could be martyrs. So they chose to disavow the attitude of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to dissolve all connection with it, and to establish a Church South.

Under the circumstances it can be seen how some in the General Conference would not oppose their going off if they wished to do so, but the Church was not divided by the General Conference of 1844, or by the Methodist Episcopal Church. Those who resolved to go out divided themselves from the Church.

It is an error to think that all the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church south of Mason and Dixon's Line withdrew from that Church to enter the Church South, or to suppose that all in slave territory withdrew from the old Church. Either supposition is an error and far from harmony with the facts.

The Methodist Episcopal Church continued south of the line which then marked the boundary between what was called free and what was called slave territory. Thus the Philadelphia Conference, which did not withdraw, not only took in part of Pennsylvania, but also embraced the State of Delaware, the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and the Eastern Shore of Virginia, the latter three sections being slave territory, and, so, the Baltimore Conference, which in its entirety remained in the old Church, took in Maryland, which was slave territory, and its southern boundary extended to the Rappahannock River in Virginia, all of which was slave

territory. In the same way the Methodist Episcopal Church remained in Western Virginia, and in other Southern sections where slavery still continued.

The bulk of the slave section, however, was embraced in and by the new Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the largest body that ever withdrew from the original Methodist Episcopal Church.

VIII

THE FIRST DELEGATE FROM THE CHURCH SOUTH

THE major part of the Southern Conferences having withdrawn and formed an independent Church, there were now two Methodist Episcopal bodies, each having a separate government, but both governments having a common form of polity, their books of Discipline being very much alike, as the new Church carried over from the old its various forms, laws, and usages.

Each Church had its own General Conference which met quadrennially. The old Church kept up its regular order and the new Church took the mid-year in the old quadrennium. So the new Church held its first General Conference in 1846 and the old Church, retaining its order, followed in 1848, and so it has continued.

The new Church, being intended for the South, significantly used that geographical term, indicating direction and location, in forming its title, and so called their organization the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, while the old Church, continuing its existence without change, naturally continued the original title, the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The general understanding was that the Church South was for the South, and that it would limit itself to the South, but not have the whole South, for Confer-

ences belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church projected into the South and embraced considerable Southern and slave territory. Church South authorities entered and claimed territory that was claimed by the Methodist Episcopal Church and in the early years there was considerable contention between the two Churches. After this conflict had gone on for about a year the first General Conference of the Church South met in 1846 and, towards the latter part of its session, decided to send a delegate to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church which was to meet in 1848. He could not be a member of that body but he could in some sense stand for the Church South.

This looked like fraternity in form at least, but this appointment led to an impressive incident in the Methodist Episcopal General Conference of 1848. This body was opposed to the interpretations the Church South had placed upon certain acts of the General Conference of 1844 and was equally opposed to certain actions of the Church South which seemed to grow out of the said interpretations and inferences drawn therefrom.

The delegates in the General Conference of 1848 felt that the Methodist Episcopal Church was being wronged in various particulars, that the interpretations of the Church South were not justified by the exact facts and conditions in 1844, that certain things claimed to have been done by the General Conference of that year had never been legally consummated by the Methodist Episcopal Church or by the fulfillment of suggested contingencies on the part of the South, while other things that some claimed were utterly unconstitutional. For these and other reasons the General Conference of 1848 repudiated certain interpretations and inferences

and declared certain actions of the General Conference of 1844 to be null and void.

To such a General Conference having such pronounced opinions and in the exciting and confusing events of only three years after the withdrawal of the thirteen Southern Conferences and the creation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, came the Reverend Dr. Lovick Pierce who had gone out with the Church South.

Doctor Pierce had been one of the mighty and influential Southern men in the General Conference of 1844, and was greatly respected by both sides in that body. His own General Conference of the Church South had met for the first time only two years before and he now appeared in its interest and as its representative. On the third day of May, the third day of the General Conference of 1848, instead of presenting his credentials, he addressed a personal letter "To the Bishops and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in General Conference assembled." He was too well informed to style it the Methodist Episcopal Church, North, or the Church North, or the Northern Church, for there never was such a Church with such a title.

In this letter he stated that the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, had appointed him as its delegate to bear "the Christian Salutations" of the Church South and to convey its desire that "fraternal relations" should be maintained between both bodies, and to make the offer and that it be accepted. Then the letter says: "The acceptance or rejection of this proposition, made by your Southern brethren, is entirely at your disposal; and, as my situation is one of painful solicitude until this question

is decided, you will allow me to beg your earliest attention to it."

It seemed scarcely tactful at that moment to suggest that there might be a rejection of the proffer, and the intimation he makes that there could be any question was calculated to make it an issue.

That he should be anxious or nervous about the matter at such an early stage when the General Conference had hardly, or barely, completed its organization, seems rather remarkable. That he should thus in the initial period of the session express "painful solicitude" and beg the "earliest attention" seems to indicate an undue desire to put the Conference on record in a hasty action. That he is seeking a formal and permanent record is shown by the language of the next and last paragraph of the letter, as follows: "And I would further say, that your reply to this communication will most gratify me if it is made officially, in the form of resolutions."

As he was not presenting his credentials at that time, it should have seemed more judicious not to have raised any doubt as to the character of the action of the Conference or the form of such action but to have simply notified the Conference of his presence, or if he said anything further to have assumed that the Conference would give him a favorable reception.

The very form of the letter was likely to start suspicion, put some on their guard, and provoke inquiry.

The first and second days of the session had been taken up almost entirely with organization, the formation of committees, and the reception of memorials, and the same was true of the third day, the day when

Doctor Pierce wrote and presented his letter to the Conference. No statement had been made to, and no discussion had taken place on the difficulties that had arisen during the previous three years between the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Church South. It would seem that the great Doctor might have selected a happier moment for the presentation of himself and the letter, though he may have calculated that it was better for him to enter before the discussion of the difficulties could be reached, but it might be interpreted as an effort to bring on the discussion.

Whatever may have been its purpose, it would seem that the presentation of the letter at such an early day did rush the Conference into a response before it was entirely ready to act with deliberation.

Doctor Pierce's letter having been read to the Conference, it was referred to the Committee on the State of the Church. The letter was read and referred towards the close of the session of the third day and the report of the Committee on this matter was presented early on the fifth day, thus giving a little over a single day for its preparation. The Committee recommended the adoption of the following:

"Whereas, a letter from Rev. L. Pierce, D.D., delegate of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, proposing fraternal relations between the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, *South*, has been presented to this Conference, and whereas, there are serious questions and difficulties existing between the two bodies, therefore,

"*Resolved*, That while we tender to the Rev. Doctor Pierce all personal courtesies, and invite him to attend our sessions, this General Conference does not consider

it proper, at present, to enter into fraternal relations with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South."

In this no discourtesy to Doctor Pierce was intended. On the contrary the proposition was to extend to him "all personal courtesies" and to admit him to the sessions of the General Conference. The trouble was with the "serious questions and difficulties existing between the two bodies," and not with Doctor Pierce himself.

These difficulties, indeed, in their view were serious enough. This General Conference held that the Church South had gone outside of its own boundaries and trespassed upon territory occupied by the Methodist Episcopal Church, and, by these and other acts, had vitiated its own understanding of the action of 1844. The Conference also held that the Church South had taken property which rightfully belonged to the Methodist Episcopal Church, and to this Conference had come, before Doctor Pierce's letter was read, memorials and complaints from Arkansas, Missouri, and Kentucky, "asking redress for the grievances" growing out of these movements. So there were other complaints and allegations to the effect that Churches had been wrongfully taken from members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and this very General Conference voted that "The provisions respecting a boundary have been violated by the highest authorities which separated from us, and thereby the peace and harmony of many of the societies on our southern border have been destroyed."

Of course the other side held a contrary view. With the conflict of views and actions there were "serious questions and difficulties" which the Conference thought should be settled before there could

be "fraternal relations" between the two bodies. Doctor Pierce presented his letter before these questions could even be discussed.

In view of the logic of the situation, the Reverend John A. Collins, of the Baltimore Conference, moved "to amend, so that the consideration of the report be delayed until the questions of division of Church property and of the division line are settled," but this motion was laid on the table.

Various interesting motions were presented and lost, with the exception of one offered by the Reverend Joseph S. Tomlinson, of the Ohio Conference. This was a motion to amend the report by adding: "Provided, however, that nothing in this resolution shall be so construed as to operate as a bar to any propositions from Doctor Pierce, or any other representative of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, towards the settlement of existing difficulties between that body and this."

With this addition and qualification the report was adopted.

The next morning the intention of the report was further elucidated by the adoption of the following: "*Resolved*, That on the vote of yesterday, laying the motion of J. A. Collins, inviting Reverend Doctor Pierce within the bar, on the table, we did not intend to exclude Doctor Pierce, but believed the object of the amendment to be fully included in the original report," and the Secretary of the Conference was "ordered to furnish Doctor Pierce forthwith a copy of the above resolution."

The action shows that the General Conference of 1848 wished to treat Doctor Pierce with courtesy and

therefore invited him to attend its sessions and to have a seat within the bar which was a distinct courtesy. Moreover the Conference expressed a willingness to receive from Doctor Pierce, or any other representative of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, any propositions looking towards the settlement of existing difficulties between the two Churches.

What the General Conference further said was, that, in view of the contentions and the unsettled difficulties, it did "not consider it proper, at present, to enter into fraternal relations with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South." The question was not as to Doctor Pierce but as to formal fraternal relations with the other Church. The Conference requested Doctor Pierce to remain and sit with the body, and also to present propositions tending to settle the difficulties, and the implication was that when the difficulties were adjusted the Conference would be willing to establish fraternal relations.

Apparently the Conference hesitated to recognize Doctor Pierce so as to establish formal fraternal relations because it feared that that would be regarded as condoning what it maintained were improper actions by representatives of the Church South, and as accepting as right what the Conference believed was wrong in the course of the new Church in the South.

Doctor Pierce did not present any proposition in regard to the difficulties between the two Churches or their settlement, neither did he avail himself of the invitation to sit within the bar of the Conference. He did not come to settle difficulties or to show how they might be settled. He came to have himself formally recognized as a formal fraternal delegate with all that that recognition implied. Not receiving that kind of a

formal recognition, he seemed to regard himself as having no mission to promote fraternity and bring the two bodies together or into harmony.

So on the 9th of May, about four days after the General Conference had acted on his case, he sent to the Conference his credentials containing the statement of his appointment. Why his credentials were withheld until the Conference had acted seems somewhat strange.

Another singular thing is that he also asked for a copy of his letter to the Conference, and the Conference voted that a copy be furnished him.

One very striking thing in this whole matter is the marked difference between Doctor Pierce's letter to the General Conference and the wording of the credential given him by the General Conference of his Church.

The latter document reads as follows:

"Resolutions passed by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at its session held in Petersburgh, Va., on May 23, 1846.

"On motion of F. E. Pitts, *Resolved*, by a rising and unanimous vote, That Dr. Lovick Pierce be and is hereby delegated to visit the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to be held in Pittsburgh, May 1, 1848, to tender to that body the Christian regards and fraternal salutations of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

"In case of the inability of Doctor Pierce to attend the session of the aforesaid Conference, the bishops are respectfully requested to appoint a substitute.

"I certify that the above is a true transcript from the journal of the General Conference of the Methodist

Episcopal Church, South. In behalf of the Board of Bishops,

"JOSHUA SOULE, *Chairman.*

"*Pittsburgh, May 4, 1848.*"

This credential clearly states that Doctor Pierce was sent simply to tender "the Christian regards and fraternal salutations" of the General Conference of the new Church, but Doctor Pierce's letter implied the formal establishment of a "fraternal relation," and contained a challenge to accept or reject the proposition, and a practical demand that "the acceptance or rejection" be "made officially, in the form of resolutions." The form of a challenge that should bring a formal and binding public record in writing runs through the entire record. The Conference was to be put to a test and asked to make a fraternal alliance at a time when there were "serious questions and difficulties existing between the two bodies." That was the effort of the good Doctor.

The tone of the letter from Doctor Pierce is very different from the credential giving the action and instructions of the Church South General Conference. All the credential directed and authorized Dr. Lovick Pierce to do was "to tender to that body [the Methodist Episcopal General Conference] the Christian regards and fraternal salutations of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South," but the Doctor in his letter raised an issue and demanded that the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church take an attitude and commit itself by a binding action in a certain form and that it be duly recorded in the transactions of the body. Doctor Pierce sought to

gain a diplomatic point and to secure the written proof thereof which were very different purposes from the simple authorization of the credentials from his General Conference.

All they instructed and empowered him to do was to convey Christian regards and fraternal salutations. If he had presented his credentials and tendered such fraternal and Christian greetings there can be no doubt the General Conference would have courteously heard him. This is proved by the fact that the Conference extended courtesies to him, asking him to be present at the sessions, to have a seat inside the bar, and to present propositions that might tend to diminish the differences and to harmonize the two Churches.

Unfortunately Doctor Pierce did not introduce himself with his credentials, but began with his own personal letter and the General Conference was compelled to take action without having seen the credentials, which contained his authorization and instruction, and, apparently, without any very distinct knowledge that there was such a credential. Doctor Pierce presented his personal letter on the third day of the Conference but did not present his credentials until the ninth day, and then with seeming reluctance, because one member in the discussion had alluded to it, he had promised it, and the Conference "ought to see it." It should have been presented to the Conference at the very beginning and before it took any action, and then it would have known what he had been sent to do and he might have conformed strictly to his instructions. If this had been done subsequent misinterpretations, misunderstandings, and unintentional misrepresentations might have been avoided.

It may seem also a little singular that the credentials bear the date, "Pittsburgh, May 4, 1848," the day after the Doctor presented his own letter, and the day before the General Conference took action in regard to the request in Doctor Pierce's letter. How a document agreed upon "in Petersburgh, Va., on May 23, 1846" and signed by Bishop Soule should be dated Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where the General Conference was meeting, and on "May 4, 1848" when this Conference was in session, is not perfectly clear, though there may be an explanation.

Doctor Pierce, on the same day that he presented his credentials, also sent the following letter:

"'*To the Bishops and Members of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church:*

"'Reverend and Dear Brethren,—I have received two extracts from your journal of the 4th and 5th instant. From these extracts I learn you decline receiving me in my character as the accredited delegate of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and only invite me to a seat within the bar, as due to me on account of my private and personal merits. These considerations I shall appreciate, and will reciprocate them with you in all the private walks of Christian and social life. But within the bar of the General Conference I can only be known in my official character.

"'You will therefore regard this communication as final on the part of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. She can never renew the offer of fraternal relations between the two great bodies of Wesleyan Methodists in the United States. But the proposition can be renewed at any time, either now or hereafter, by the Methodist Episcopal Church. And, if ever made upon the basis of the Plan of Separation, as adopted by the General Conference of 1844, the Church South will cordially entertain the proposition.

"'With sentiments of deep regard, and with feelings of disappointed hope, I am, yours in Christian fellowship,

"'L. PIERCE,

"'Delegate from the M. E. Church, South.

"'*Pittsburgh, May 8, 1848.*'"

Taking all these facts together, with this letter as a climax, the incident impresses one with the idea that the good Doctor came determined to force an issue and expecting a conflict. Even a superficial consideration makes one feel that Doctor Pierce, the old warrior, came with the desire, if not a plan, to score a diplomatic and controversial point, rather than to win the Conference and to remove the difficulties.

So before he presented his credentials he made an issue over his own personal letter which, to say the least, did not reflect the exact form of the authorization in his credentials, and compelled the Conference to act, not on the wording in the action of his own General Conference, but on a different issue which he stated in his own letter.

His parting letter was the climax of a most singular procedure on the part of a man of very decided ability. An average man would have presented his credentials and waited the pleasure of the Conference to fix a time when he could be properly received without interference with the necessary business, and, when he spoke, he would have followed his instructions and presented "the Christian regards and fraternal salutations" of the body he represented. Doctor Pierce, however, did not follow this course but substituted his own letter and raised an issue that was not specified in the credentials, and forced the Conference to meet that issue, when it

had hardly completed its organization, and had had no time to discuss the difficulties which had disturbed both Churches.

For the Doctor to say that the General Conference had refused to receive him as an "accredited delegate" is very peculiar, for the General Conference of 1848 did not decline to receive him as a delegate, but in its action speaks of him as "delegate of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South." It did more than "only invite (him) to a seat within the bar," for it opened the way for him to speak, and invited him as a "representative of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South," to present "any propositions" "towards the settlement of existing difficulties" between the two bodies. What a great opportunity it was for a man and a minister of his ability to offer suggestions of amity and to explain away misunderstandings! Alas! he did not avail himself of this opportunity, and, indeed, he does not seem even to have attempted to convey to the Conference "the Christian regards and fraternal salutations" of his own General Conference, excepting in the brief reference in his letter on the third day of this Conference, where he says he was appointed to bear "the Christian salutations" of his Church, but it does not appear that he made any attempt to do so, and the General Conference did not know the contents of the credentials until the day he wrote his valedictory epistle.

The General Conference of 1848, in answer to the issue Doctor Pierce had raised in his personal letter, did not say it did not want, or never would have, fraternal relations with the Church South, but that owing to "serious questions and difficulties existing

between the two bodies," it did "not consider it proper, *at present*, to enter into fraternal relations," the fair inference being that it would not be unwilling if these disturbing questions were settled. The General Conference gave Doctor Pierce an opportunity then and there to help settle them, but he made no effort to do so.

Evidently Doctor Pierce was not there to admit there were any difficulties to be settled or to attempt their adjustment in any way. He was there to raise an issue and to commit the General Conference on that issue. This may have been the part of a tactician for his side but it was not the way to produce peace and harmony.

The Conference, doubtless, felt that to commit itself to such a fraternal alliance as the Doctor suggested would be an acknowledgment that there were no "serious questions," and that the Church South was right in its interpretations and acts, a concession the General Conference felt it could not, with its convictions, righteously make.

In the closing part of his farewell letter Doctor Pierce has what sounds like an imperial ultimatum, to the effect that there never can be fraternal relations between the two Churches except "upon the basis of the Plan of Separation, as adopted by the General Conference of 1844." That was the very thing that this General Conference would not do and later in its session it declared that the act here styled the "Plan of Separation" was not a plan to separate the Church, that the Church never agreed to the action called by some the "Plan of Separation," and that, whatever it was, it was null and void.

The other part of the ultimatum may or may not have been by authority, namely, that the Church South never again would "renew the offer of fraternal relations," but that the offer would have to be made by the Methodist Episcopal Church sounded like a final judgment, but there was hope of a reopening, and when difficulties were settled by agreement, by the lapse of time, or by other circumstances the Methodist Episcopal Church would not hesitate to propose fraternal relations.

Seventeen years of an interim would pass before that could be done, but the time would come.

In passing, it will be noticed that both Doctor Pierce, in his letter, and the first of the General Conferences of the Church South in its resolution or credential for the Doctor, and that only a year after the formation of the Church South, refer to the old Church as The Methodist Episcopal Church, the title it had in 1844 and from the beginning of the denomination in 1784. That is an acknowledgment that the Methodist Episcopal Church of 1848 was the same Methodist Episcopal Church that had come down from the beginning. It was not changed, but the new Church in the same documents is styled The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, showing that it was different, and that by its accepted title it proposed to be for a section in the Southern part of the country, while the old Church was still bearing its legal title "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America," and not the Church North. Those who made the Church South withdrew from the old Church, but the old Church remained the same.

IX

EVENTS FOLLOWING THE FORMATION OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH

THE thirteen Annual Conferences in slave territory stretching to the Gulf of Mexico, having in convention, in 1845, dissolved their connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church and established a new denomination called the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, a new and very peculiar situation developed both ecclesiastically and politically.

Politically the distinction between the South and the North was accentuated. Ecclesiastically the practical and actual situation was as follows: The great Methodist Episcopal Church was Methodistically dominant in the Northern part of the country, where slavery did not exist, and also extended southward and included a considerable section of slave territory in the northern part of which there was much free sentiment and there was found a strong attachment to the Methodist Episcopal Church, notwithstanding the action of the General Conference of 1844 in disapproving of slaveholding by one in the episcopacy. Indeed some of the strongest supporters of that action were from that very section, and some of them insisted on stronger and even more drastic action in the case of the bishop who had come into the possession of slaves.

Coming up from the Gulf of Mexico to this locality, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was eccle-

siastically in practical and actual control, but, at what may be called the point of contact between the then work of the two bodies, there was a strip of territory running through a number of states which was frequently alluded to as the "Border," which took in slave territory but in which the people had mixed sentiments as to the two Churches and the occasion of their differences on the matter of a bishop holding human beings in the form of servitude called slavery. Some were for the old Church and some were for the new, so that in this belt of country there was a degree of confusion and friction as conflicting claims were presented and disputed and new alignments were taking place, for readjustments had to be made as preachers and people sought to connect themselves with the new organization or determined to remain with the old.

Notwithstanding the paramount position of the Church South in the Southern section and the mixed conditions on the "Border," the Methodist Episcopal Church never was out of the South. A few facts of history will demonstrate the accuracy of this statement. Thus, immediately after the thirteen Annual Conferences in the farther South had organized the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the Methodist Episcopal Church still was found in Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri, and other sections of the South.

In the Methodist Episcopal General Conference of 1848, the next following that of 1844, and the creation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1845, boundaries were marked for the Western Virginia and the Missouri Conferences. The Western Virginia was to include Western Virginia and part of Maryland, the

Missouri was to include Missouri and Arkansas and the territory west and north to the Rocky Mountains, not included in the Iowa Conference, and the Oregon and California Mission Conference, embracing Oregon, California, and New Mexico also was indicated. These and other boundaries make it plain that the Methodist Episcopal Church still remained in the South, immediately after, and notwithstanding, the organization of the Church South in 1845.

In the Methodist Episcopal General Conference of 1852 there were delegates from the Western Virginia and the Missouri Conferences and from other Conferences in slave territory, and in this General Conference the boundaries of the Kentucky and the Arkansas Conferences were indicated.

The Kentucky Conference included all Kentucky except that which was in the Western Virginia Conference, while the Arkansas Annual Conference, which was set off from the Missouri Conference, included Arkansas, Texas, part of Missouri, and part of New Mexico. At the same time the Missouri Conference was changed to include most of Missouri and part of the Nebraska Territory. So the Methodist Episcopal Church still continued in the South.

In the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church held in 1856 there sat delegates from Western Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri, Arkansas, and other Annual Conferences that extended south of the Potomac and Ohio Rivers.

In the Methodist Episcopal General Conference of 1860 which met nearly a year before the Civil War, delegates sat from the Western Virginia, the Kentucky, the Missouri, the Arkansas, the Kansas and Nebraska,

the California, and from other Conferences that extended into the South and far into slave territory. At that time the California Conference embraced the State of California, the Sandwich Islands, and so much of the territories of New Mexico and Utah as lay west of the Rocky Mountains, and the Kansas and Nebraska Conference embraced those territories at that part of New Mexico and Utah which lay east of the Rocky Mountains. At this General Conference Kansas was separated from Nebraska, and as a Conference was made to embrace all Kansas, New Mexico, east of the Rocky Mountains, and the State of Texas which had been in the Arkansas Conference.

Thus is it seen that just before the Civil War the Methodist Episcopal Church still was in the South, and, west of the Mississippi River, was in the very far South.

In brief, it never was out of the South, and delegates representing these Southern sections sat in the General Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, not only in 1844, but also in every General Conference down to and including 1860, and this has been the case ever since, and more numerously as the years have gone on.

However in these years the Methodist Episcopal Church did not operate in the farther South, east of the Mississippi River. For this there were reasons outside of any paper formulations of either body. The Methodist Episcopal Church was regarded as unfriendly to slavery and that institution made a solid barrier where it was very strongly entrenched, as it was south of the northern tier of the Southern States. In addition, feeling ran high, antagonisms asserted themselves,

and dangers threatened. These were practical difficulties that prevented the Church from penetrating the far South even if no other reasons existed.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, however, in the meantime, essayed to enter and occupy what was spoken of as the North and which was claimed and occupied by the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held in 1848, complained that the Church South had, since its organization in 1845, improperly entered the Ohio, the Pittsburgh, the Baltimore, and the Philadelphia Annual Conferences which had not withdrawn but had remained in the old Church. That they had acted improperly the representatives of the Church South denied and their Church continued to push northward not only into slave but also into free territory.

In only about sixteen years after the withdrawal of the thirteen Southern Annual Conferences from the Methodist Episcopal Church and their formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, many events had occurred which vitally affected both the nation and the Church.

Among other things this ecclesiastical withdrawal was followed in these few years by the attempt of certain Southern States to withdraw from the United States and to establish in their section a new and independent nation.

John C. Calhoun is said to have foreseen this at the time of the withdrawal of the Southern Conferences, and to have remarked that it was the beginning of the dissolution of the National Union. Henry Clay, another great statesman, expressed his regret as he inter-

preted the act and the tendency of the times, and perceived its influence upon the nation.

The result was that the country was plunged into the great civil war between the said Southern States and the National Government of the United States of America.

It is worthy of note that this bloody, expensive, and exhausting effort was to divide the National Union along about the same geographical line the thirteen Southern Conferences claimed when they withdrew from union with the Methodist Episcopal Church. This may be regarded merely as a remarkable coincidence, but the fact is interesting to note, and, in both cases, there was a common factor, namely, the local existence of slavery and that which went with it, which made a divisive force as against the free section and the free sentiment. The same force was in action in the Church as well as in the State and it was unfortunate for both, but in forming judgments we must take into account the environments.

Breaking out in 1861, the war continued about four years, ending in 1865 with victory for the union forces and the unity of the United States was preserved and perpetuated.

Thus from 1845 to the close of the Civil War in 1865 there had been many momentous events both for the nation and the Church.

In the short period of twenty years there had been the withdrawal of the Southern Conferences from the Methodist Episcopal Church and the formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, while in the nation there had been an effort to withdraw a section of the country from National Union, which disunion move-

ment was defeated in four years and for the eternal benefit of that very section. In that short time, only two-thirds of a single generation, these and many other important things had occurred.

In all these years the Methodist Episcopal Church had always maintained a very direct relation to the South. It had never been out of the South but had maintained active operations in that part of the country, and when the war, with its devastation, its bitterness, and its suffering, was closing, this Church of the United States thought of the South and considered whether it could and should do still more for the Southern section of the same United States of America.

X

RENEWED ACTIVITY BY THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE FAR SOUTH

WHEN the Civil War was over the National Union was preserved but the great South was impoverished. This important section had been devastated and the people generally had lost their possessions.

Among the other interests the Church South had suffered so severely that it was not able to meet the wants of the Southern section in its post-bellum condition.

On this point there is clear and convincing testimony from the Southern side. Thus Bishop McTyeire, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, gives a vivid picture of the sad conditions which existed in the South immediately following the Civil War. In his "History of Methodism," published in 1884, he says:

"The Church South shared in all the calamities of the long and unequal conflict. The distresses of war were intensified by the impoverishment and confusion which follow invasion and defeat. . . . Hundreds of churches were burned, or dismantled by use as hospitals, warehouses, or stables. College endowments were swept away and the buildings abandoned. Annual Conferences met irregularly or in fragments; the General Conference of 1862 was not held, and the whole

order of the itinerancy was interrupted; the Church press was silent, and many of the most liberal supporters of the Church and its institutions were reduced to abject want. The situation, as revealed after peace was restored, may not be described. Two thousand one hundred and ten battles had been fought, and hundreds of thousands of lives and thousands of millions of property had been destroyed."[1]

With such distressing conditions the South generally, but, especially, its religious work needed help, and the help could come only from outside the South.

There was pressing need—wide-spread and deeply-seated need—and the Methodist Episcopal Church was best able to meet this imperative and immediate need, and because of its ability it became its duty to give its aid.

That it had a fraternal spirit towards the distressed Church in the South is demonstrated by financial assistance rendered in time of great stress when it brought succor to missionaries of the Church South in a foreign country. Bishop McTyeire himself may tell the story. He says: "The missionaries in China had been cut off from all communication with the home Board. The drafts in their hands were honored by the indorsement of the Treasurer of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, at New York, and served their uses for a time; but this, of course, was only a temporary relief, leaving a debt. This debt was hard to meet and one of the first efforts was directed to it. The lightest sum seemed heavy; but it was a pleasing instance of brotherly kindness, when such acts were

[1] Bishop Holland N. McTyeire, D. D., "A History of Methodism," Nashville, Tenn., 1888, p. 664.

rare. The catholic-spirited act of Dr. Thomas Carlton gave an intimation of what many others felt but had no opportunity of demonstrating. Whatever mitigates the logic of war is a charity to the human race." [1]

Of course Doctor Carlton acted as representative, and under the authority, of the Methodist Episcopal Missionary Society, so that it was really the Methodist Episcopal Church that came in this instance to the rescue of the Church South. This showed no antagonism, but a most brotherly spirit.

As has been seen, the Methodist Episcopal Church had been unduly limited, or had failed to do its full duty in one section of the country during the twenty years since 1844 and 1845. Circumstances of more than one kind had interfered with operations in the farther South, the greatest barrier being human slavery and a proslavery sentiment that became the stronger and more intense the farther the South was penetrated.

Now, however, the war had caused President Lincoln to issue his emancipation proclamation and slavery had been destroyed.

The changed and distressing conditions in, and the needs of, the South attracted attention, and had attracted attention even before the close of the war, and many minds began to ask what could be done to help that suffering section.

The South needed help in many ways and in none more than in lines of religious work.

The Methodist Episcopal Church was able—and best able—to render aid to that part of the country. It knew the South and never had been out of the South. Further, it was not a sectional Church. It was not the

[1] Bishop McIlyeire, "History of Methodism," p. 665.

Northern Church or the Methodist Episcopal Church, North. It had always been in the South and even where slavery was found, and never had a limiting title of North, or East, or West. There was a Methodist Episcopal Church, South, but the old Church was the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America. That was its title and that indicated its field. Sectionalism had been destroyed and a non-sectional Church could go anywhere. Slavery had disappeared and the people of the South needed assistance. So it was believed that the Methodist Episcopal Church now had an opportunity and a duty to extend its work throughout the entire South.

In the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held in the city of Philadelphia in May, 1864, movements, looking towards the return of that Church to the farther South, were inaugurated.

In their Episcopal Address to the General Conference of 1864, the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church said:

"The wall of partition is broken down by that very power whose dreadful ministry was invoked to strengthen it. And now, the way being open for the return of the Methodist Episcopal Church, it is but natural that she should reënter those fields and once more realize her unchanged title as 'The Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States of America.'"

The bishops also called attention to the duty of the Church to reënter the entire South.

By this General Conference the bishops were authorized to start work and to establish Mission Conferences in the farther South.

The movement was not welcomed by all in the

South, and in some places there was very positive opposition, but while there was antagonism in not a few localities, nevertheless the ministers of the old Church were received with open arms in many directions.

Only twenty years had passed since the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, had been formed and claimed that section, and numbers of old members were found who had never willingly left the old Mother Church, and there were some who might have said that when the old Church left them, they refused to become identified with the new Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

In the Alabama-Georgia region, for example, there were preachers and people who, rather than join the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, when they found the old Church was not accessible to them, formed a new and different denomination of their own. They never wanted to leave the old Methodist Episcopal Church, and others were like them in this feeling.

In West Virginia, and in the mountains and valleys of Eastern Kentucky, and Tennessee and elsewhere, where the national union element had existed in considerable strength, there was a strong desire for their own old Church or the Church of their fathers and their mothers, and which belonged to the entire nation.

Soon congregations were gathered, churches were formed, and Conferences were organized, and again the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America was at work in every section of the said United States in harmony with its name.

XI

THE RIGHT TO PERFORM RELIGIOUS WORK IN THE FARTHER SOUTH

SOME have said that the Methodist Episcopal Church had no right to go into the South after the Civil War. But it was in the South before the Civil War and never had been out of the South.

Then, perhaps, the qualification is made that the objection is to the going of that Church into the farther, and the far, South. Naturally one would ask, If the Church has always been in the South why should it not go anywhere and everywhere in the South?

Further, in view of the needy conditions in the South after the war one might truly say that the question was not of mere right to enter the farther South, but one of imperative duty, in view of the distressing conditions in that section and the ability of the Methodist Episcopal Church to render religious assistance. Such conditions and such ability to help should override any mere technicality that any one might thrust in the way.

Nevertheless some have persistently declared that the Methodist Episcopal Church had no right to penetrate and work in the South after the Civil War.

Such a suggestion must seem strange to one who regards the United States of America as a free country where individuals and religious organizations are understood to have liberty to move and operate in any section according to their pleasure.

One therefore is naturally impelled to inquire why the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America had not as much right to enter and carry on its operations in the South, and the far South, as it had to enter and carry on its operations in the West and Southwest, or in any other portion of the United States.

Some may answer, in the first place, that there were two Methodist Episcopal Churches, namely, the Methodist Episcopal Church, North, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and that the Methodist Episcopal Church, North, was limited to the North, while the South belonged to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. That would be an answer if it were true, but it is not correct. It was not correct at the close of the Civil War and it never was true.

It is true that the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was in the South, and it had voluntarily taken the limiting title South, that it had put a limitation upon itself by the very use of that qualifying word, and that it had voluntarily taken the limiting title with the evident purpose of working in the South, but there was no Methodist Episcopal Church, North, which had taken such a sectional title with such a sectional purpose, or for any other purpose.

There never had been, as there is not now, a Methodist Episcopal Church with the qualifying and limiting title North or Northern.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, organized in 1784, never changed its title, but came down the generations with the old, and original title The Methodist Episcopal Church in America, or in the United States of America, which were synonymous phrases. From the beginning

it remained unchanged. It was both in and for the United States of America without sectional limitation. So there never was a Methodist Episcopal Church, North, though after the lapse of about sixty years there did come into existence a Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

But, in the second place, some have said that the Methodist Episcopal Church had no right to go into the South, because the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held in 1844, divided the Church, and so divided the denomination that it gave the Southern, or slaveholding section to the Conferences in the South, which became the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, while it gave the Northern, or non-slaveholding section to the Methodist Episcopal Church. So, it has been reasoned that, as the General Conference of 1844 did thus sever the Church and so allot the free and slave sections that, therefore, the Methodist Episcopal Church was restricted to the North and had no right to enter the South.

But the General Conference of 1844 did not so divide the Church, and did not divide it at all in any way.

There was no division of the Methodist Episcopal Church by the mutual consent of those concerned, so that the one original Church ceased to be while from the old trunk two Churches branched off.

The General Conference of 1844 did not turn over all the slaveholding section to what became known as the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and all the free section, without any of the slaveholding portion, to the Methodist Episcopal Church.

It is true that all the territory embraced by the Church South was within, but did not cover all, the

slaveholding section, but the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1844 and 1845 and on not only embraced all the free territory but also occupied slave territory in the South and it remained in the South from 1844 down to, through, and after the Civil War, while slavery existed, after its destruction, and is in the same section at the present time. It is evident, therefore, that there could have been no such territorial division as some have assumed. So no argument could be based on that to bar the Methodist Episcopal Church from the South.

The General Conference of 1844 did not divide the Methodist Episcopal Church into two bodies, neither did it set off any part of its territory for the exclusive exploitation of an independent body made up from its own ministry and membership and to the exclusion of itself. In other words it did not sever the Southern section from the Methodist Episcopal Church. The General Conference of 1844 did not divide the Church. Indeed it had no legal right to do so, or to set off any part of the United States of America, for there was no law that gave the General Conference power to destroy itself or the Church, or any part thereof. It was, as it is, a body with limited powers, acting within restrictions which were intended to preserve the General Conference and the Church and to prevent the General Conference from destroying the Church in whole or in part.

So the General Conference of 1844 had no right to divide the Church or to set off any part of it within the United States for it was the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, its primal territory and habitat.

As a matter of fact it did not divide the Church, and, so, the Methodist Episcopal Church has come down without a break in its continuity from the beginning to the present time, with its unbroken history, its continuous records, and its unchanged identity.

The General Conference of 1844 did not divide the Church, and it did not abandon all the slave territory, or pass over all the Southern slaveholding section to what became the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

But, one asks, was there not something said about division or disunion in the General Conference of 1844? Certainly there was. Certain Southern delegates intimated and declared that there would be a breaking away from the old Church, but the General Conference did not vote for, or order, disunion, and, if it had done so, its action would have been null and void, for it had no authority so to do.

Something was said, some things were attempted, and something was done, but there was not the division of the Church, by the General Conference, as some poorly informed persons seem to have inferred.

In brief, this is the history: In the General Conference of 1844, after many days of discussion involving the question of human slavery, and what should be done with the bishop who held slaves, the General Conference overwhelmingly disapproved of the act of the bishop and expressed the opinion that as he would not be acceptable as the presiding officer in all of the Conferences on that account, he should desist from the performance of his episcopal functions until he relieved himself, or became relieved of, that which acted as an impediment and incapacitated him from acting as a

bishop everywhere, which self-relieving it was thought he could accomplish almost any time.

In view of the expressed opinion of the General Conference, fifty-one of the delegates presented to that body what was called a formal and written "Declaration" in which they declared that the action of the General Conference in regard to the slaveholding bishop "Must produce a state of things in the South which renders a continuance of the jurisdiction of this General Conference over these [Southern] Conferences inconsistent with the success of the ministry in the slaveholding states."

This deliverance pointed to a meditated and threatened severance of relationship on the part of signers of the "Declaration" and those for whom they spoke. In other words it was an announcement of the severance of persons and Annual Conferences in "slaveholding states" from the Methodist Episcopal Church.

To this "Declaration" that they could not continue under the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the intimation that they would withdraw from the Methodist Episcopal Church, the General Conference of 1844, in a formal document, responded that "in the event of a separation," such as the signers of the "Declaration" had indicated, that is to say, not a separation made by the General Conference, but one made by the Southern Conferences or the parties represented in the declaration which said they could not consistently remain under the jurisdiction of this General Conference, or, in other words, under and in connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church, the General Conference would take a certain attitude which was recited in the document which was prepared as an answer to the said "Declaration" that they could not continue under the

jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church to which they then belonged.

That the separation was not one made, or to be made, by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, but by the parties represented in the "Declaration," is further shown by the statement in the response: "That should the Annual Conferences in the slaveholding states find it necessary to unite in a distinct ecclesiastical connection."

This language shows that the separation was not made in or by the General Conference of 1844, or to be made by that body, but was a possible, not certain, separation, which might occur subsequently to the General Conference, and, if it did occur, would be the free action of "the Annual Conferences in the slaveholding states" and would be the consummation of the threatened act of the Southern delegates from slaveholding states, as plainly indicated in the "Declaration" of these delegates and in other statements made in the General Conference of 1844.

This General Conference did not make a separation, or division, but in view of the "Declaration" and similar oft-repeated statements, the General Conference stated that, if the said Southern Conferences subsequently did do what their delegates declared must be the case, then the General Conference would "meet the emergency with Christian kindness and the strictest equity," and certain things were particularized.

In other words, the separating or dividing was not something that the General Conference of 1844 did, or would, do, but some contingent thing the said Southern Annual Conferences might themselves possibly do after the General Conference of 1844 had ceased to exist.

That the separation of the Southern Conferences was not the action of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1844 appears further from the fact that the separation was not made in 1844, but in 1845, about a year after the adjournment of that General Conference, and occurred when that General Conference was not in existence.

As the records of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, clearly state, the separation of the said Southern Conferences was made "by the delegates of the several Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the slaveholding states, in General Convention assembled," in Louisville, Kentucky, which convened on the first day of May, in the year 1845, and continued in session until Monday afternoon, May 19th of the same year.

On Saturday morning, May 17, 1845, this convention of delegates from thirteen Annual Conferences located in slaveholding states deliberately, and entirely on their own motion, solemnly declared "the jurisdiction hitherto exercised over said Annual Conferences by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church is entirely dissolved; and that said Annual Conferences shall be, and they are, hereby constituted a separate ecclesiastical connection . . . to be known by the style and title of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South."

The separation or division, therefore, was manifestly not made by the General Conference of 1844, or by anybody in 1844, but about a year after that General Conference had finally adjourned and ceased to be, the separation was made by representatives of these Southern Conferences, assembled in Convention in 1845. It

was this Southern Convention, acting beyond the Methodist Episcopal Church and outside the law, that voted to dissolve the connection, and did the separating, and having withdrawn formed a new Church for the South.

The Methodist Episcopal General Conference of 1844 did not divide the Methodist Episcopal Church, and no other body divided the Methodist Episcopal Church, but representatives of some of the Southern Annual Conferences of their own free will separated from the Methodist Episcopal Church, thus diminishing the bulk of its ministry and membership but leaving the original Church intact as to its history, its continuous records from the beginning, its organism, and every essential element of the Church prior to 1845, and a few ministers and members, or many members and ministers, departing this life, or departing from the Church of 1784 and 1844, did not, and could not, destroy or modify its identity. The Methodist Episcopal Church did not divide itself or destroy itself in any degree or in any sense whatsoever, and nobody else did.

But, in the third place, it may be said, as it has been said, that the General Conference of 1844 adopted a "Plan of Separation," and, therefore, the Methodist Episcopal Church had no right to go into the South.

If it did adopt a plan of separation, it still is true that that General Conference did no separating and proposed no separation.

But the General Conference adopted no document that called itself "The Plan of Separation" or "A Plan of Separation" or that used the phrase "a Plan of Separation." That phrase has been used by individuals from time to time, by some because they wanted

something to be so understood, by some because others had used the phrase, and, further, by some who did not know and comprehend all the facts in the case. Colloquially it has been in use but legally it did not represent a fact.

There was no act of the General Conference of 1844 that made a separation, or urged a separation, or proposed a separation, though there was a paper passed in view of the "Declaration" that certain Conferences in the South could not remain in the Methodist Episcopal Church and that it was threatened that a large section of the South would go out from under the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

In its answer to the "Declaration" the General Conference viewed the possibility of the execution of these declarations by the going off of the indicated Annual Conferences in the South, considered it as a contingency, and not a certainty, saying "in the event of a separation, a contingency to which the declaration asks attention as not improbable." The answer made reply to this.

The paper did not call itself a "Plan of Separation," for the General Conference was not planning a separation. It was simply meeting the aforementioned "Declaration" that looked in the direction of the withdrawal of certain Southern Annual Conferences.

The Journal of the General Conference styles it "the report of the select committee of nine, on the declaration of fifty-one brethren from the Southern Conferences," and "the report of the committee of nine." These forms were used when it was taken up on the eighth day of June.

This report did not divide the Methodist Episcopal

Church or set off the said Conferences in the slaveholding section, or advise that it be done, so that, strictly and fairly speaking, it was not a plan to separate the Church into two parts or a plan to separate a part of the Church from the main body, and the General Conference did not adopt any plan to separate.

It did have something to say as to what might, or would, be if others should separate from the Methodist Episcopal Church, but it did not plan to separate or plan to bring about a separation. It did state that in view of the "contingency" which had been pointed out, and "in the event of a separation," not made or to be made by the General Conference, but, possibly, by the Annual Conferences "in the slaveholding states," the General Conference would not resort to severe measures, and enforce legal claims, but would "meet the emergency with Christian kindness and the strictest equity," and the details recited were marked evidences of "Christian kindness" and a generous equity which went to the very extreme of generosity.

But the General Conference did not desire the threatened separation, did not make it, and did not approve or agree to it. It simply dealt with a declaration that others would have to separate and that their separation was doubtless inevitable.

In the answer the General Conference of 1844 made to the declaration of the Southern delegates looking towards the withdrawal of Conferences in the "slaveholding states" from the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church, no separation of the Church is declared or decreed, but recognizing the declaration as to a withdrawal of some Conferences in slave territory, the General Conference said: "That should the An-

nual Conferences in the slaveholding states find it necessary to unite in a distinct ecclesiastical connection, the following rule shall be observed with regard to the northern boundary of such connection," and there followed certain provisions "to meet the emergency with Christian kindness and the strictest equity," as the paper stated.

There is no suggestion that the General Conference made any division, but if there was any separating it would be done by the Southern Conferences if they did "unite in a distinct ecclesiastical connection," as had been intimated in the declaration and in various remarks, but all this was declared to be "a contingency," and as such it might never occur.

It is true that in the Louisville Convention of 1845, "the delegates of the several Annual Conferences" "in the slaveholding states" did speak of a "plan of separation." Thus in their act of dissolution they said: "We, the delegates of said Annual Conferences, acting under the provisional plan of separation adopted by the General Conference of 1844, do solemnly declare," etc., "and that said Annual Conferences shall be, and they hereby are constituted, a separate ecclesiastical connexion, under the provisional plan of separation aforesaid."

These delegates said that, but the General Conference of 1844 adopted no document that called itself a "plan of separation," and took no action which divided the Church. Colloquial interpretations no matter by whom used cannot have the force of legal phrases, even when they are subsequently employed in a formal resolution by another body. That there was some confusion of thought amid the excitement of those trying months

may be conceded, but the facts show that the General Conference of 1844 did not plan to separate any part of the Church and that it did not divide the Church. The separating was done by others and about a year after the General Conference of 1844 had ceased to be.

Should one, in the fourth place, undertake to say that the General Conference of 1844 not only divided the Church into two parts but also drew a line of separation, which was Mason and Dixon's Line, and, consequently, the Methodist Episcopal Church had no right to go into the South, the answer is that this also is erroneous.

First, such a phrase as the "line of separation" does not appear anywhere in the answer to the "Declaration." Secondly, if any line was drawn it could not have been Mason and Dixon's Line, and Mason and Dixon's Line was not mentioned in the report of the committee of nine or anywhere else in the acts of the General Conference. If there was any line it could not have been Mason and Dixon's Line which was the boundary between Pennsylvania which was free and Maryland where slavery was found, and so in popular parlance was regarded as the line between the free North and the slave South, but the General Conference took no action mentioning Mason and Dixon's Line, or indicating it as a line of division between two Churches or to be the line. Maryland, which was below that line, was solidly for the old Church and some of the strongest supporters of the action of the General Conference on the slavery question were delegates from the Baltimore Conference in that state, and there was no thought of the Baltimore Conference, or of Maryland, separating from the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Conferences like the Philadelphia, the Baltimore, the Pittsburgh, and the Ohio, that adhered to the Methodist Episcopal Church extended southward below Mason and Dixon's Line, and the Philadelphia, the Baltimore, and the Pittsburgh went far below that line.

That line was not fixed by the General Conference of 1844, by the Methodist Episcopal Church, or by any authority in 1844 or after 1844. Down to the Civil War, as well as later, the Methodist Episcopal Church has always been far to the south of Mason and Dixon's Line, and even the Church South did not legally claim, and, on its own basis, had no right to claim up to the historic line of Mason and Dixon. The General Conference of 1844 marked no such line of division.

It should also be repeated that the Methodist Episcopal Church has always been in the South, and always covered considerable slave territory as long as human slavery existed in the United States, and, after slavery's extinction, it continued to remain in the same field. It had a right to be below Mason and Dixon's Line and that line was not a line of separation in the Church.

In the third place, the General Conference of 1844 made no "line of separation" to divide the Church, for it did not propose to divide the Church, and whatever it said relative to a possible separation by other parties was simply in view of the declaration of some that there must and would be a separation, but this was merely a contingency depending upon the future action of those making the threat, a contingency that might never become an actuality.

In the fourth place, if there was even a possible line of separation it was not made by the General Conference of 1844, but would be made by, and be dependent

upon, the number of Southern Conferences that might declare their connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church dissolved. If all who were presumed to threaten did withdraw their line would embrace them; if fewer withdrew, their line would be contracted correspondingly.

If there was any line, it was, generally speaking, the northern border of the most northern of the Southern Conferences that would withdraw, but that nobody in 1844 could predetermine, and it could not be known until it was known what Conferences did withdraw, which was not determined until 1845 and then by the Southern Conferences themselves.

It is asserted that the General Conference of 1844 made a "line of separation," but the General Conference made no "line of separation." If it had wanted to make a line it could not have done so for it could not tell, and no one could foretell what Annual Conferences would "unite in a distinct ecclesiastical connection," or if any one would decide to go out from the "jurisdiction" of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The answer to the Declaration does mention "the line of division," but the General Conference drew no "line of division." The answer also referred "to the northern boundary of such connection," but the General Conference did not run that boundary. That had to be made by those who would withdraw, and thus divide themselves, from the Methodist Episcopal Church. The General Conference made no line and marked no boundary, and certainly drew no definite line, such as Mason and Dixon's Line, or the line of the Ohio River.

If a few or many Conferences withdrew they would

make their line; if none withdrew there would be no line at all.

It is also to be remarked that while the answer refers to "the northern boundary of such connection," it does not, in similar phrase, mention any southern boundary of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

When the thirteen Southern Conferences in 1845 declared themselves withdrawn by declaring their connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church "dissolved" and formed what they called "The Methodist Episcopal Church, South," they did by that act make a line of separation for themselves, as far as they had any power to make one, but they had, strictly speaking, no power to make a line for the Methodist Episcopal Church, even if they could for themselves.

The line of the Southern Church, made and claimed by the above action of 1845, must have been and was the northern boundary line of the most northern tier of the said thirteen Southern Conferences, modified by those who adhered to the old Church. So it is plain that the General Conference of 1844 could not determine what that would be, and, further, that no line was ordered or authorized by the Methodist Episcopal Church through the combined action of its General Conference and its Annual Conferences, and, therefore, the Methodist Episcopal Church neither made, nor bound itself to recognize, such a line.

The withdrawing Southern Conferences made a line by undertaking to carry those Conferences with their boundaries out of the Methodist Episcopal Church. If the northern tier of Conferences had refused to join with the others that would have carried the northern line of the new Church farther South.

In that sense the answer to the "Declaration" speaks of "the northern boundary of such connection," which evidently was made by the most northern boundaries of the most northern of the Southern Conferences that might or would withdraw, modified by the Churches and bodies of individuals who would adhere to the old Church.

Manifestly such a line was not a straight line, but an irregular line, following the angles and curves of the old Conference boundaries, modified by those that remained in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Under such an arrangement the northern boundary of the Southern Conferences that declared themselves withdrawn did not embrace all the slave territory, and the Methodist Episcopal Church continued to care for sections where slaves were found.

The Ohio Conference went into Virginia; the Pittsburgh Conference extended into Virginia; the Philadelphia Conference, besides its Pennsylvania territory, took in Delaware, the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and went down to the southern tip of the Eastern Shore of Virginia, all of which at that time was slave territory; while the Baltimore Conference, besides its large free territory in the North, took in Maryland and a large portion of Virginia, down to the Rappahannock River, all of which was slave territory.

A very large part of Virginia continued in the Methodist Episcopal Church and was not within the line of the Church South. The Baltimore Conference of the old Church went down to the Rappahannock River, and the northern line of the new Church South at that point did not come farther north in Virginia than that river, and, hence, was far south of Mason and Dixon's

Line and considerably to the south of the District of Columbia. So that the line of the Church South did not embrace Maryland, Delaware, the city of Washington, or the part of Virginia north of the Rappahannock, and the Methodist Episcopal Church was perfectly free to go not only south of Mason and Dixon's Line but also to go into slave territory south of the Potomac River.

When the thirteen Southern Conferences withdrew in 1845 they, by that act of withdrawal as Conferences, made their own limitations, and the northern boundary of their new Church was the northern boundaries of the most Northern Conferences of the thirteen, possibly modified, which at the eastern end did not come farther north than the Rappahannock River in Virginia. That was their line within which they were logically self-limited, because their Conference lines did not go farther north, while above that line the Conferences did not withdraw with them. The Church South, however, speedily disregarded that line which was the line of its own Annual Conferences.

The General Conference of 1844 did not do so, but even if it had passed an act dividing the Church and drawing a line of separation, that was not the act of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and by itself was null and void.

The General Conference of itself did not have power to do such things. Such power had not been given it by the Constitution of the Church. It had power to make "rules and regulations" for the Church but it had no power to destroy or divide the Church. No such power had been given the General Conference and no such power was inherent in it. It had no

power to destroy or sever the Church in the United States in whole or in part. That indeed would prevent its making rules and regulations for the severed part, whether large or small, as the case might be.

The General Conference is not supreme in all things over the Church. It is not the whole Church, but the creature of the Church, and must act within the authorizations and privileges made by the Church in its Constitution. The General Conference is only a part of the Church, and, certainly, it would take not less than the whole Church to destroy itself in whole or in part.

One may be told that the Supreme Court, in 1854, decided that the General Conference had the power to divide the Church in 1844 and that at that time it exercised it.

That, however, was not the decision. The decision of the court was on the question of the right of the Church South to a share in the Book Concern property, and the court held that the Church South was "entitled to their share of the property of the Book Concern." There was ground for that decision on the basis of equity. The Church South was a fact. Its preachers and people had helped to build up the Book Concern, and the point could have been made that, therefore, they were entitled to an equitable share.

That was the case and that only was the decision. Remarks made by the Justice, other than the decision, might or might not have been made and the decision would have been just the same. *Obiter dicta*, or aside remarks, by the way, and not on the main point, are not the decision, and sometimes judges make observations which are not essential to, or a logical basis for,

the decision even if it is a sound decision. The decision is the important thing and not the casual remark.

So, sometimes learned lawyers and judges who know civil law may err in Church matters through lack of knowledge as to ecclesiastical history and ecclesiastical law.

In this case when the Justice remarked that "The same authority which founded that Church in 1784 has divided it," he stated as a fact that which was not a fact, for the authority that founded the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784 was not the authority that was vested in the General Conference of 1844.

The organizing Conference of 1784 possessed the sovereign power and was the only sovereign power in the ecclesiastical organization of that time, but in 1844 the sovereign power was not vested in the General Conference, as it is not now, and therefore it did not possess the same authority as was possessed by the Conference of 1784, and, consequently, the General Conference of 1844 had no authority to divide the Church, and, therefore, could not have divided the Church in 1844.

The Conference of 1784 possessed the whole power of the Church but the General Conference of 1844 did not possess all power but was a limited body.

Down to, and including, the General Conference of 1808, the sovereign power was in the General Conferences but not in the General Conferences after that year. Prior to, and during, the Conference of 1808 the General Conference had all power because it contained all the governing force of the Church, but, in 1808, the Constitution then adopted changed the body to a delegated General Conference and divided the sovereign

power between the new delegated General Conference and the Annual Conferences, and the General Conference of 1844 was that kind of a modified and limited body.

After 1808, questions of a constitutional, or organic, nature required the concurrent action of the General Conference and the Annual Conferences. These were facts with which the Justice was not familiar.

In regard to the matter in question, the General Conference of 1844 could not of itself decide. It could not make a division of the Church in the United States of America or draw a line of separation, or approve of a separation made by others, or give up territory in the United States, and, even if the General Conference had the right to initiate such an action, it was not complete until the Annual Conferences had agreed to the act in the constitutional way. If in this case there was any such action attempted by the General Conference, the Annual Conferences never concurred. On the contrary the Annual Conferences refused to concur and voted down that which was sent around to them on this subject. So whatever was said or done as to division, or plan, or line of separation by the General Conference of 1844, if anything was done, it was invalid because it never received the consent of the Annual Conferences. In other words, even if the General Conference alone did adopt a plan providing for this separation, it had no legal force.

This so-called provisional arrangement of 1844 was not a finality in itself. It was to meet a threatened contingency and had to run the gauntlet of conditions which did not yet exist and also the scrutiny and votes of the Annual Conferences, where the votes of three-fourths of the ministers would be required.

This was recognized by the Southern side. Thus in the General Conference of 1844, Doctor Paine, afterwards Bishop of the Church South, said: "This separation would not be effected by the passage of those resolutions through the General Conference. They must pass the Annual Conferences, beginning at New York, and when they came round to the South, the preachers there would think and deliberate and feel the pulse of public sentiment, and of the members of the Church, and act in the fear of God, and with a single desire for His glory."

It is sufficient to say that the Annual Conferences never gave their consent, and, therefore, whatever was intended by the General Conference was not completed, and was not binding, and, on the basis of Doctor Paine's statement, whatever may have been attempted by that General Conference was not done, as it was not agreed to by the Annual Conferences.

Then the very next General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, that of 1848, utterly repudiated every act or understanding or supposition that the General Conference of 1844 was alleged to have done or intimated in the nature of division, plan of separation, or line of separation, including the possible division of the Book Concern property.

This repudiation was based on several grounds, and, particularly, on the ground of unconstitutionality.

The General Conference of 1848 of the Methodist Episcopal Church reviewed the events of 1844, 1845, and the other years of the quadrennium, and carefully formulated its judgment.

Among other things it said: "We claim that the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, exists as a distinct

and separate ecclesiastical communion solely by the act and deed of the individual ministers and members constituting said Church."

"We affirm it to be impossible to point to any act of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church erecting or authorizing said Church; nor has the said General Conference, or any individual, or any number of individuals, any right, constitutional or otherwise, to extend official sanction to any act tending directly or indirectly to the dismemberment of the Church."

The General Conference of 1848, having recited and summarized the facts involved, declared that "Three-fourths of the members of all the Annual Conferences did not concur in the vote to alter the sixth Restrictive Rule, and thus sanction the Plan, for the accommodation of which said alteration was asked. And the conditions and the requirements of said Plan have been violated, and hence said Plan *is*, and, from the first failure of the conditions of said Plan, or either of them, *has been*, null and void."

"Finally, having thus found, upon clear and incontestable evidence, that the three fundamental conditions of said proposed Plan have severally failed, and the failure of either of them separately being sufficient to render it null and void, and having found the practical workings of said Plan incompatible with certain great constitutional principles elsewhere asserted, we have found and declared the whole and every part of said provisional Plan to be null and void."

Thus the General Conference of 1848 annulled everything that had been done in this matter by the preceding General Conference of 1844, and consequently

nullified certain misunderstandings of what had and had not been done. This annulment was on various grounds and one was that what had been attempted had been automatically annulled by the failure of conditions and by the actions of parties who had wanted such a scheme.

If there was anything in the nature of a line of separation it was almost immediately obliterated.

The Church South ignored it and wiped it out by going over it to the northward.

If there was any line of separation the new Methodist Episcopal Church, South, almost immediately went north of it. If there was a line of separation, the Church South, by passing over it, abrogated the line and annulled any understood or possible agreement by its act of going out of the South and into the North. Thus its work was carried into Ohio almost immediately, and within four years after the organization of the Church, say in 1849, it was as far north as Oregon, which was not slaveholding territory, and by that fact obliterated any line of separation that might have been presumed to exist, and by such passing over recognized and declared that there was no limiting line.

In this statement at this time we are not proposing to find any fault with the action, but simply to show that the supposed line marked by the thirteen Annual Conferences was very promptly disregarded by themselves.

It may be said, possibly, that soon after the formation of the Church South, the line was disregarded by both parties, but we will not pause to decide that, but, if that was the case, and if there had been any contract, it had been abrogated by both parties, and the

line, if there was any, was obliterated before the end of the Civil War, and, indeed, before the war came on.

If, then, there was no limitation on the Church South, there was none on the Methodist Episcopal Church. If so, then there is no force in the claim that the Methodist Episcopal Church had no right to go South, for it had at least as much right to go South as the Church South had to go North.

If there had been a line drawn by mutual agreement, the contract was quickly cancelled, so that long before the Civil War there was no sharp line that constituted an impassable barrier, and the Methodist Episcopal Church was not bound or restricted by an asserted but obliterated line if that Church wished to go into the farther South.

This Church had restrained itself and had kept out of the farther South for a score of years, but it had a right to go if it pleased and, towards the close of the Civil War, it felt the Southern need and then it did please to go as it had a right.

It is also a fact that long years ago the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, formally recognized the fact that there was no observed line of separation. This it did in its very first General Conference after the Civil War.

The General Conference of the Church South, in 1866, adopted the following:

"*Resolved*, That as the geographical line defining the territorial limits of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, established by the General Conference of 1844, has been officially and practically repudiated and disre-

garded by the Methodist Episcopal Church, therefore we are bound neither legally nor morally by it; and that we feel ourselves at liberty to extend our ministrations and ecclesiastical jurisdiction to all beyond that line who may desire us so to do."

In the Journal of that 1866 General Conference of the Church South, this action is indexed as the "repudiation of the line between the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South."

The Methodist Episcopal Church had claimed that from the beginning the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, had gone beyond its own line, and one writer has asked: "Why did not the Southern Church abrogate the line before commencing operations on the other side?"

Whatever answer may be made to that question, it is plain that, on its own showing, the Church South confessed to having abrogated the line, if there was one, and could never again fairly claim the existence of such a line. This action of 1866, for example, precluded the raising of a claim thereafter by the Church South to any line of division.

Long years before that the Methodist Episcopal Church had said there was no restrictive line to prevent its going into the far South, and now the Church South, which had previously gone north of its supposed line, formally declares there is no restraining line. Both being agreed upon that abrogation of any supposed, imaginary or real line of separation, neither could again urge a separating line against the going of the Methodist Episcopal Church into any part of the South.

Even if the Methodist Episcopal Church had no right to go into the farther South in 1845, it does not follow

that it had no right to go in 1865, twenty years afterwards and thereafter.

Circumstances had changed. Many vital changes had taken place. The destruction of slavery had radically changed relations and issues, and, it may be said, even contracts, for no one could fulfill or be bound by contracts based on slavery which had been outlawed.

With the sweeping results of the war, and, particularly, the emancipation of the slaves, there was a new era, and plans and contracts made necessary by slavery were, by these new conditions, rendered inoperative and so were abrogated.

Slavery which had been the real barrier had been removed and destroyed, and, having disappeared, no line of separation in the field now existed.

If the Methodist Episcopal Church had no right to go into, or be in, the far South in 1845, it certainly had in 1865. With the end of the Civil War there was an open door and there was room and need for more workers. The people were in need of religious assistance, and the Methodist Episcopal Church had the men and the money to help meet the need. It was an opportunity and a duty. The need existed and the duty followed.

There were people in the South who wanted the old Church, and soon there would be many more, and they had a right to have the Church of their choice, as had any people in this free country.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, as a Church, still remained intact, just as it had been before 1845, though it had lost a considerable body of ministers and members, through their voluntary withdrawal, for which they alone were responsible. Then it was diminished in bulk, but, as a Church, it still was the same.

It remained, as it always had been, the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, without any sectional limitation. It was in the United States and for the United States, and for all the United States of America, and had a right to go into the South as it had anywhere else in the United States of America.

It was in the South, it had a right to be in the South, and it had a right to penetrate into the farther South. It was needed and it went.

XII

RESULTS OF THE WORK OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE SOUTH

WITH the fact before us that the Methodist Episcopal Church has always been in the South and that about the close of the Civil War it once more went into the farther South and into the very far South, the question may be asked: What has been accomplished by the Methodist Episcopal Church in the South and, particularly, in that part of the South which had been more or less occupied by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South?

In brief it may be stated, in reply, that it sent many workers into that field and contributed millions of dollars for the benefit of the people of the South. That does not measure but it partially indicates the spirit of sacrifice and service. When a Church and its members contribute so much, the gifts and the self-sacrifice prove a deep interest in the undertaking, and when to this it is added that many of the Christian workers never returned to their Northern homes, but died and were buried among the Southern people among whom they labored, the proof of Christian devotion is so evident that no question can be raised. This was part of the outlay and the only income expected was the spread of Christ's kingdom and the Christian uplift of population.

The Methodist Episcopal Church went to reach and benefit the people generally without respect to class distinctions. Its ministrations were offered the white people and a considerable portion of the white population was speedily reached. The union peoples of the mountains and the valleys welcomed it. The "poor whites," as some were styled, saw in this Church a powerful helper, now that their day of opportunity had come. People who with their fathers had always wanted the old Church and regretted its absence, rejoiced upon its return. People who saw the light of the rising sun of a new day for a new South hailed its coming. And Northern white people who had gone from the North during the closing period of the war, and after its close, desired the ministrations of the old non-sectional Church.

It reached the colored people just freed from the shackles of slavery and in that most trying period of ignorance and inexperience when they were half-blinded and confused and were groping their way to real freedom.

The undertakings of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the South were varied, mighty and effective.

Naturally, the first form of effort was evangelistic. The preacher went with the Gospel of Jesus, congregations were gathered, people were converted, members were organized, and church buildings were erected. The religious work carried with it the moral, and, along both lines, efforts were energetically made for the uplift of all classes of the population, and, wherever the Methodist Episcopal Church went, it was a mighty force for morals, for religion and for intelligence.

Next to its religious and moral work in the South,

the Methodist Episcopal Church has done a great educational work. It sent qualified teachers, formed schools, erected buildings for the accommodation of teachers and pupils, and has given a curriculum, carrying the student through the kindergarten and primary school up to the college and university, and in the meantime giving industrial training, and for those who need a technical education it has had its technical schools for the intending minister, teacher, and physician.

For this evangelical and educational work it has sent its best men and women and given its millions of dollars, and repeated over and over again the contributions of laborers and of money.

This has not been a waste but has accomplished a work that others were not doing and could not do at all or could not do to the same extent.

It has helped the religious work of the South, strengthened its moral forces, and exerted a mighty uplifting power for the South that has told for good and will tell more and more in future years. It was a strong reinforcement for every agency for good, and, especially, for all the evangelical Churches, and that in a section where there have never been too many workers for the moral and religious uplift of all the people.

The benefit of the Methodist Episcopal Church to other denominations in the South, and to that section generally, never can be tabulated, but manifestly it must be immense. With its thousands of Christian workers, its many schools and churches, and its millions of money spent in good deeds, it could not be otherwise.

It is not too much to say that one of the greatest

blessings that ever went to the South was the Methodist Episcopal Church. Thus take a single point.

Going into the farther South at the close of a great Civil War it was just in time to strengthen fraternal feelings and to help harmonize those who had been warring with each other, so that, in a patriotic sense, the return of the Methodist Episcopal Church to the middle and farther South has been a great aid to the National Union. Not a sectional Church, but for all the United States of America, it has diminished sectionalism in the South, promoted unification, and strengthened the common national spirit.

Not only has it been politically, though not in a partisan sense, the greatest unifying influence in a territory where there were and are many sectional religious denominations, but it has also greatly strengthened general Protestantism in that section.

Practically it has added vigor to the common evangelical work, and has benefited the population socially, intellectually, and religiously.

The Methodist Episcopal Church is not in the South in antagonism to any other Protestant Church, but to give the people what they need and that for which it stands, and the Methodist Episcopal Church is admittedly the exponent of some things that others do not stand for, or do not stand for in the same degree, or with the same emphasis. It has its own mission which is, probably, somewhat different from that of any other Church, and which it alone can prosecute in its own way.

One might venture to suggest that nothing ever benefited the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, quite as much as the return of the Methodist Episcopal

Church of the United States of America to the entire Southern section. Even in the course of twenty years there was time to evolve and develop differences, so that one branch of Methodism might begin to crystallize a somewhat different type of Methodism. The coming of the Methodist Episcopal Church was calculated to modify or prevent this danger, and to present to the people a common standard type which would tend to give a oneness to the Methodism of both Churches in the Southern section of the country.

The Methodist Episcopal Church in carrying its multitude of workers and its millions of money into the South, and carrying on its many ecclesiastical, educational, and benevolent enterprises, has, to say the least, stimulated the Church South to greater effort.

Further, the Methodist Episcopal Church has lightened the load of the Church South by undertaking work which the latter Church could not do, and, indeed, it may be said, which the other evangelical Churches could not do, for even to-day more workers are needed and there is room for all.

The Methodist Episcopal Church by its work in the South has helped to solve what is termed the "negro problem," and that on the basis of the Gospel of Christ and Christ's Golden Rule.

Going to the colored people when they were just emerging from slavery, when in their enforced ignorance they were groping their way like men in the dark, the Methodist Episcopal Church taught them the alphabet, how to spell, and how to read, and, so, put them on the road to all necessary and possible human learning. It has gone with and guided hundreds of thousands of them through the half century and more since

the emancipation of their race, and educated the children of the children of those who came out of slavery, until they have their own teachers and pastors, and their own lawyers and doctors, and the general illiteracy has been immensely reduced. More than that, it has gathered hundreds of thousands into their own Churches and Sunday-schools, formed them into their own Annual Conferences, with their own presiding elders, so that, practically, they have an ecclesiasticism of their own in which they have had a training to manage their own church affairs. Beyond that, or included in that, the Methodist Episcopal Church has taught them to be moral in their living and to be law-abiding citizens, and this with a success which has called forth commendations from those who are not entirely freed from former prejudices. One reason the Methodist Episcopal Church could do this great work was because the colored people regarded it as free from the influences of slavery—from which their race had been freed.

Some have imagined that all, or most, of the work of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the South has been for and among the colored people. This, however, is a misapprehension. The Methodist Episcopal Church went not to a single race, but to the people of the South, and it proposed to reach all the people who needed it and wished for its ministrations and its care, as far as it had ability and opportunity to serve them.

So it went to the white people in the South. Some gladly received it at the beginning and the work spread, so that now the Methodist Episcopal Church has hundreds of thousands of white people in its Southern membership, and, what may surprise many, a larger

white membership than its colored membership in the South.

It has built churches, schools, and colleges for the white people. It has followed and cared for many white immigrants from the North and West who have been pouring into the South, but who did not want a Southern Church, many of whom already belonged to the Methodist Episcopal Church.

It has helped the white union element in the South by diminishing sectionalism and intensifying the national feeling, and its non-sectionalism has called forth the sympathy and approval of native white Southerners who love the nation.

Many of its ministers are typical white Southerners who themselves or their fathers fought in the fratricidal war of the sixties. They love the flag of the Union and they love the Church that is for the entire United States.

One result of this is that the Methodist Episcopal Church in the South is not only a Church in the South but a Church of the South, wanted not only by Northern people who have gone into the South but by Southern people who are "to the manner born" and who are truly Southern in their traditions and affections but who are willing to keep old political issues out of the Church of Christ.

The Methodist Episcopal Church has blessed both white and colored in the South. By sending preachers and teachers, and raising others on the soil, it has greatly added to the force of Christian workers, giving more than the South could put into the field, and putting into the work vast sums of money the South itself could not furnish. Aiding in the work of all the Prot-

estant Churches in that section, it has been wherever it has gone a beneficent influence and an uplifting power.

What the Methodist Episcopal Church has done for others in the South cannot be calculated. What it has accomplished for itself in the South can only be estimated in part.

It has built hundreds of churches and schools and has invested immense amounts of money in such properties.

For more than half a century it has been carrying on its work through its Board of Home Missions and Church Extension, its Woman's Home Missionary Society, its Educational Boards, and other agencies with zeal and liberality. A Church that has attempted and done so much cannot be other than a beneficent influence.

It has gathered a communicant membership of away beyond half a million, not counting Sunday-school scholars, and many adherents who are attached to the denomination, though they are not formal and legal members, and, hence, are not counted.

Out of the movement have come a considerable number of Annual Conferences covering the entire South, and now, in the very territory which was occupied by the thirteen Southern Conferences that withdrew in 1845, the Methodist Episcopal Church has more members than the Church had in that section in 1844 and 1845, before the Southern Conferences went out.

In 1844 the entire Church throughout the United States had 1,171,356 members and 4,621 preachers. In 1845 when the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was organized the new Church claimed 459,569 including

1,519 travelling preachers and 124,961 colored members. That left in the old Methodist Episcopal Church about 713,306 members and 3,102 ministers.

The Church South had a total membership, deducting the 1,519 preachers, of 458,050 members. Subtracting the colored members, numbering 124,961, the Church South at that time had 333,089 white members.

As against the total membership of the Church South in that section in that time, namely 458,050, the Methodist Episcopal Church in that locality now has over half a million.

More than that as against the white membership of the Church South at the time of the withdrawal, namely, about 333,089, the Methodist Episcopal Church, it is calculated, now has in that section over 300,000 white members, a fact that may astonish many who have not been definitely and accurately advised in regard to the work of the Methodist Episcopal Church in that Southland, and these are below the real figures.

Beyond the more than three hundred thousand white church-members of the Methodist Episcopal Church of legal standing in the South, there is a very considerable white constituency which adds greatly to that number as showing the sphere of actual influence and care of the Methodist Episcopal Church in that section. Thus the white Sunday-schools have as many as or more than are in the regular membership of the Church. Allowing for possible duplications this would make an aggregate of members and Sunday-school scholars of from five hundred thousand to six hundred thousand white persons. Again rating the adherents who are not actual members at the usual proportion of three to one,

on the basis of three hundred thousand white members, that would make nine hundred thousand white adherents which would total one million, two hundred thousand white members and adherents in the South. If we estimate two adherents to one member then it would make a total of nine hundred thousand white members and adherents. Or if we count one adherent to each regular member then there would be a total of over six hundred thousand, and counting the more than three hundred thousand in the white Sunday-schools of the Church, a total of nine hundred thousand.

These figures which are a very conservative estimate would indicate a white constituency of members and adherents of a million or more who are more or less under the care and influence of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the South.

Then taking the total membership of white and colored of more than five hundred thousand with about the same number in the Sunday-schools, and adding the adherents in the same proportion, it would figure out a great mass of people numbering, perhaps, two millions, under the influence of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the South and for which this Church is more or less directly responsible.

Evidently the Methodist Episcopal Church has accomplished very much in the South and its relation to the South is not to be treated as a trifling affair or a matter of little moment.

XIII

HAS THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH ANY PRESENT DUTY IN THE SOUTH?

THE good work done in the South during the last half century by the Methodist Episcopal Church will be conceded by all who are well-informed and fair-minded. Some, however, may ask: Is the Methodist Episcopal Church needed at this time in the South? In other words, Has the Methodist Episcopal Church any longer a mission in the South and for the South?

Why not? Why should the question be raised? Does any one ask whether it has any mission in the North, in the West, in the Northwest, or in the Southwest? Certainly not. Then why should any one ask whether it has any mission in and for the South?

The Methodist Episcopal Church is the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America and the South is in the United States of America and, therefore, the Methodist Episcopal Church is for the South as it is for the other parts of the country.

On general principles it is to be assumed that it has a mission there as it has elsewhere, and the burden of proof to the contrary would be upon those who would urge that it ought not to be in the Southland.

Why should it not be in the South? It is an American Church and for America and the South is in Amer-

ica. It is a Church calculated to do, and is doing, evangelical Protestant work which is needed in the South, as it is needed in other parts of the land, too much of which is not now done, notwithstanding the service there rendered by the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The needed work makes a needed mission in the South for this Church and a large part of the Southern population needs, appreciates, and loves the Methodist Episcopal Church. This part of the population wants the Church, asks for the Church, and would feel that it had suffered a great loss if it was deprived of its ministrations. The people composing this section of the population want this Church and as free Americans they have a right to have the Church they want.

The Methodist Episcopal Church has now a right to be and continue in the South for a considerable part of it is in the South, identified with the South, and as genuinely Southern as the South itself. It is rooted in the South and its mission there is to grow, to shelter, and to bear fruit in the South.

It has a mission to care for those who have gathered under its wing in that section. It is needed there at this time to provide for the hundreds of thousands who have come into its fold, many of whom had not been born when the controversies of the forties and the Civil War of the sixties brought so much distress and disaster. With many of the Methodist Episcopalians in the Southern section these things are not even memories. They have heard about them but they never knew anything about them.

Further, not a few of them are from the North and the Methodist Episcopal Church was the Church of

their childhood, and their Southern born children are genuine Southerners who have never been under the influence of any other Church.

It is needed in the South to care for its more than half a million of Southern communicant members, its more than half a million scholars in its Southern Sunday-schools, and its many more than half a million of Southern adherents who are affiliated in feeling or conviction and who more or less regularly attend its services and come to some extent under its Christian influence.

This possible million and more look to the Methodist Episcopal Church for religious instruction and moral guidance. Can any one be sure that all these will just as willingly hear the voice of another and just as gladly follow into another fold? And, if the Methodist Episcopal Church should leave them, who can be sure that they will find as good pastures and thrive as well elsewhere? To care for these, who are a part of itself, constitutes a mission, and a sufficient mission for the Methodist Episcopal Church in the South. Shall a parent not provide for his own family? Shall a Church not care for those it has raised up and care for them where they are—in the South?

If the Methodist Episcopal Church this very instant called out of the South every preacher and teacher whom it has sent from the North or the West, that would only be a fraction and there still would be a large body left composed of Southerners who for one or two generations have been under its influence and training. If the Methodist Episcopal Church technically withdrew from the South these Methodist Episcopalians would remain in the South rooted in that section.

What would become of them? Where would they go? Who would care for them? Who would care for them in the same way?

The Church could not withdraw its workers if it would. They are a part of the South and must remain with that part of the country.

The South, which has been benefited by the Methodist Episcopal Church, still needs it, for the Methodist Episcopal Church still stands for the same essential things.

It still is a non-sectional Church in, of, and for, the entire United States of America. Wherever it goes it weakens sectionalism and strengthens the idea of national oneness and sameness. So it still is helping to nationalize the entire country and everywhere to evoke and spread the national spirit, and it still is needed where there are so many sectional branches of Churches of different denominations which sectional branches have up to the present time refused to unite with the parent bodies. In contrast, the Methodist Episcopal Church is in the whole country and of the whole country with no North, and no South, and no East and no West, recognizing one flag, one nation, and one ecclesiasticism covering the whole land.

The Methodist Episcopal Church is now needed in the South to care for the increasing immigration coming into the Southland. One of the phenomenal facts of migration to-day is the drift towards the South. Not only is Northern capital stimulating and strengthening Southern industries, but Northern people also are moving into the Southern section, and the immigration into the South is much greater than that which is going into the West.

All this is helping to make the New South, and the Methodist Episcopal Church has a special mission in and for this New South. It is needed to care for the hundreds of thousands of immigrants from the North who are pouring, and will continue to pour, into the South. To many of them it is their old Church and to all it is a non-sectional and nation-wide Church.

One may ask: Does not the Methodist Episcopal Church interfere with the work of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South?

Not necessarily. It certainly does not need to interfere with the Church South any more than a Methodist Episcopal Church would with the Protestant Episcopal or the Presbyterian Church.

It has, and can find, its own constituency and there is more work to do in the South than all the Protestant Churches ever have done. The Church South has never covered all the territory and reached all the people in the South.

Certainly it has not seriously injured the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, as the latter's very decided growth demonstrates. Instead of injuring it has benefited that Church by its stimulating influence.

To say the least, the Methodist Episcopal Church is not injuring the Church South any more than the Church South is injuring the Methodist Episcopal Church when it goes into the North and prosecutes its work in proximity to the churches of that body, and, surely, the Methodist Episcopal Church has as much right to go into, and be in, the South, as the Church South has to go out of the South and into the North, as it has done quite from the beginning. In all equity when this has been, and is being, done, there

can be no rightful objection that can be urged to the Methodist Episcopal Church being in the South.

If a union of the two bodies into one Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America is desired and desirable, then the Methodist Episcopal Church should be in the South to demonstrate the need and to hasten the union, or to show whether the two bodies are homogeneous and whether the union is or is not practicable.

The Methodist Episcopal Church has been a great patriotic and unifying influence in the South because it is not sectional, but knows no section and serves the whole country. For this among other reasons it is needed still.

It is needed by the native Southerners who are tired of sectionalism, who want the old Church which is in and for the entire United States of America, and which preaches the same old and ever new Gospel of the Church and of Christ.

It is still needed in the South to assist in the general religious work of that part of the country, and it is helping all Evangelical Protestantism and all the people, doing a work that others are not doing and cannot do. We say cannot do mainly because as it is they are not now able to meet all the demands upon them.

The Methodist Episcopal Church can never withdraw from the South for that would be a confession that it had no right to be everywhere in the country, or, in other words, that it is a sectional Church. It has never been out of the South and it never can go out of the South or any other special section and belie its legitimate title "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America."

It cannot make itself a sectional Church for that would be an unrighteous self-contradiction, and, so, it must remain in every section where it is. In view of the facts stated there is no way by which it can honorably withdraw. Its withdrawal from the South would be an inconsistency, a blunder, and a crime.

It must not go out and it must not be permitted to go out. It must remain in some form, in full form as it is with this Church in the whole country and the whole country within this one Church, or with combined Methodisms of the whole nation in one Methodist Episcopal Church.

As things now are it can never go out of the South. It can never honorably separate itself from its Southern work, for the Methodist Episcopal Church still has a mission in the South and a greater one than ever before.

XIV

METHODIST EPISCOPAL EFFORTS TOWARDS UNION WITH THE CHURCH SOUTH

THE Methodist Episcopal Church did not make the separation that became or resulted in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. It wanted the Southern ministers and members to continue in the Methodist Episcopal Church as they had been from the beginning of the Church, but when they were determined and decided to take their departure from the original Church, its General Conference of 1844 desired that, if they did carry out their declared purpose to separate, they should be treated with "Christian kindness" and with "the strictest equity" even where they had no legal claim.

These were gracious words and indicated a friendly intention, and, as though reciprocating that form and spirit, the Southern Convention of 1845 that dissolved the connection with the old Church, and on the very day it resolved thus to dissolve its relationship and to organize a new denomination called the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, it also "resolved" that "cherishing a sincere desire to maintain Christian union and fraternal intercourse with the Church North," it would "always be ready, kindly and respectfully, to entertain, and duly and carefully consider, any proposition or plan having for its object the union of the two great bodies, in the North and South, whether such proposed union be *jurisdictional* or *connectional*."

Courteously framed as were these phrases, they unfortunately contained a fundamental error. They speak of "the Church North" and of "the two great bodies, in the North and South." This implied a dividing line which not only divided the country into the North and the South but also divided the country between the two Churches in the same way, whereas the thirteen Conferences that proclaimed their withdrawal did not embrace all the South, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, even by actual occupancy, was not limited to what was termed the North, but extended into the South.

Further, the Methodist Episcopal Church was not the Methodist Episcopal Church, North. That never was its legal title. Even in the document that some have incorrectly called the "Plan of Separation," and which the organizing convention, which made the Church South, called "the provisional plan of separation," the General Conference of 1844 never called the Methodist Episcopal Church "the Church North" or the Methodist Episcopal Church, North, though it does mention the threatened possibility of "the Church South," "The Southern Church," and "the Church in the South."

On the contrary in contrast it always speaks of "the Methodist Episcopal Church" repeating that old title over and over again, without change, because there was no change in the old Church which was to go on down through the generations with the unchanged title because it was the unchanged original Church. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was the "Church South," the intention being to make it "the Southern Church" to be in and for "the South," and, hence, the

limiting title was voluntarily chosen, while the Methodist Episcopal Church still continued to be the same Methodist Episcopal Church without any geographical limitation of North, or East, or West in its title.

Notwithstanding this attempt to put a sectional limitation on the Methodist Episcopal Church, which the facts did not justify, nevertheless, the kindly expressions, first of "a sincere desire to maintain Christian union and fraternal intercourse," and, second, the promise "to entertain and duly and carefully consider any proposition or plan having for its object the union of the two great bodies," would lead one to infer that there was a possibility of reunion.

Though the phrasing seems to put the burden and responsibility of making the proposition or devising the plan on the Methodist Episcopal Church out of which the organizers of the Church South had gone, nevertheless such language was calculated to excite hope that the outgoing Church might come back and be of the one Methodist Episcopal Church.

But the institution of human slavery, that had so much to do with the withdrawal of those who made up the Church South, made what seemed to be an impassable barrier, and remained such as long as it continued to exist.

As long as slavery had such great influence, directly or indirectly, in what was called the slave section, no voice for ecclesiastical union could come from that locality, and no voice from the free section would be heard.

Time and other forces had to work until the possible condition was created. They did work and worked more rapidly than might have been anticipated. In

less than a score of years human slavery had ceased to be in the fair land of the South. Shackles had been broken and barriers had been removed. The time of possibilities had arrived and now it would seem that a voice for fraternity and union might speak and be heard.

The Methodist Episcopal Church was the first to make a move towards union. Conditions prior to the Civil War had made it impracticable to bring about either fraternity or union during that period, but, as soon as the war was over, representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church made fraternal advances and initiated proposals for unification.

Almost immediately after the close of the Civil War, in connection with which came the destruction of slavery, namely in the month of June, 1865, the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church issued a declaration as to the matter of union between their Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

In this utterance the Methodist Episcopal bishops said "that the great cause (slavery) which led to the organization of the Wesleyan Methodists (in the Northern States) on the one hand, and of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, on the other, had ceased to exist, and they hoped the day was not far distant when these Methodist bodies might become one family again," or "they hoped the day was not far distant when these Methodist families might become one family again."

So as long ago as 1865 the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church led in a movement looking towards a union of the two bodies.

Nothing, however, came of that deliverance to encourage those who proffered the olive branch of

ecclesiastical peace, but the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, did take cognizance of the utterance of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Under date of August 17, 1865, the bishops of the Church South referred to the meeting of the Methodist Episcopal bishops and the missionary secretaries of this Church, which had been held at Erie, Pennsylvania, in June, 1865, and, commenting on their suggestion of union, the Church South bishops made a counter declaration.

In it they said: "Their bishops and missionary secretaries held a meeting in June, the proceedings of which, embracing this subject, have been published by order. Under these circumstances, some allusion to it may be proper for us."

Then, after making certain allegations against the Methodist Episcopal Church, for example, "that a large proportion, if not a majority, of Northern Methodists have become incurably radical. They teach for doctrine the commandments of men. They preach another Gospel," they say in their response: "we can anticipate no good result from even entertaining the subject of reunion with them. Fidelity to what seems our providential mission requires that we preserve our Church, in all its vigor and integrity, free from entangling alliances with those whose notions of philanthropy and politics and social economy are liable to give an ever-varying complexion to their theology. Let us abide in our lot, and be true to our calling, doing what we can to spread Scriptural holiness through these lands, and to oppose the tide of fanaticism which threatens their overflow."

Such a response was not very hopeful for union, but the Methodist Episcopal Church did not abandon its advances in that direction. The very next year other attempts were made.

In the month of April, 1866, the first time since the beginning of the Civil War, the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, convened. In the early part of that month, the New York East Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was in session in the city of Brooklyn. At the instance of the Reverend Dr. D. D. Whedon, the editor of the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, this Conference, by a vote of eighty to eight, ordered the following fraternal expression to be telegraphed to the General Conference of the Church South:

"*Whereas*, the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is now in session in the city of New Orleans, therefore,

"*Resolved*, That we, the New York East Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, hereby present to that venerable representative body our Christian salutations, and cordially invite them, together with us, to make next Sabbath, April 8, 1866, a day of special prayer, both in private and in public congregations, for the peace and unity of heart of our common country, and for the full restoration of Christian sympathy and love between the different Churches, and, especially, between the different branches of Methodism within this nation; and upon the receipt of an acceptable affirmative reply, this concert of prayer will be considered by this Conference as adopted."

This dispatch was sent on Thursday, April 5th, but was not presented to the Church South General Con-

ference until noon, on Saturday, the 7th. To the suggestion of the New York East Conference the General Conference of the Church South cordially agreed by a rising vote, and the action was ordered to be telegraphed. Unfortunately the telegram in response was not received by the secretary of the New York East Conference until about half-past ten o'clock on Saturday night, April 7th, when, of course, the Annual Conference was not in session. The secretary hastened, however, to notify the Churches in New York and Brooklyn.

On the 11th of April, 1866, Dr. John P. Newman, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and three others, who were in New Orleans, telegraphed to Bishop Ames, who was presiding over the New York Conference, then in session: "Have New York Conference request Southern General Conference to appoint commissioners, one from each of their Annual Conferences, to confer with like commissioners, appointed by bench of bishops, one from each of your Annual Conferences, in May, at Washington, to agree on a reunion of the Churches this Centenary year of Methodism, subject to the approval of your General Conference."

Following this suggestion, the very next day, Thursday, the 12th, the New York Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church sent to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, this telegram:

"We should express the hope, desire, and expectation that, at no distant day, the bodies unhappily severed will be united and suggest the propriety of your body providing a conference with a commission that may be appointed, by our bishops, with reference to reunion,

subject to the action of our General Conference, May, 1868, thus crowning our glorious Centenary."

This telegram was presented to the Southern General Conference on Saturday, the 14th, about the close of the day's session. It was then referred to the College of Bishops. On the 29th of April, eleven days after the adjournment of the New York Annual Conference, the secretary of the General Conference of the Church South sent the following to the secretary of the New York Conference:

"The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, heartily reciprocates the kind expressions of the New York Annual Conference, but cannot consent to appoint commissioners on the plan proposed."

These were well-meant efforts from those in the Methodist Episcopal Church to bring about a fellowship between the two Churches and also to secure a Conference between representatives of the two bodies in the interest of union, but in this matter they failed.

In the same General Conference of 1866 the bishops of the Church South in their episcopal address said: "In respect to the separate and distinct organization of our Church, no reasons have appeared to alter our views as expressed in August last."

Thus they reiterated their opposition to "even entertaining the subject of reunion" with the Methodist Episcopal Church.

XV

PROPOSED UNION BETWEEN THE CHURCH SOUTH AND THE METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH

THOUGH in 1866 the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, rejected in most positive terms the advances towards union made by the Methodist Episcopal Church, yet the General Conference of the Church South, meeting that very year, though its bishops formally said, referring to the advances from the Methodist Episcopal Church, that "In respect to the separate and distinct organization of our Church, no reasons have appeared to alter our views as expressed in August last," notwithstanding all this, the Southern General Conference in the same month proposed union with the Methodist Protestant Church as though discriminating against the Methodist Episcopal Church at that time.

At that time the Methodist Protestants in General Convention were in session in the city of Washington, District of Columbia.

On May 3, 1866, the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, adopted the following:

"*Resolved*, That a commission, consisting of five members of this body and two bishops, be appointed to confer with a commission, if one be appointed from the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant

Church, now in session in Georgetown, District of Columbia, on the subject of a union between the Methodist Protestant Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, with power to settle the union."

Bishop McTyeire of the Church South sent a document, which was received by the Methodist Protestant General Conference on the eighth day of its session which referred to the action of the Church South General Conference suggesting that "a commission be appointed to confer with a similar one from your Conference on the subject of union between the two Churches and with powers to conclude the terms of union, if it can be agreed upon," and Bishop McTyeire's communication also said "as several prominent brethren of the Methodist Protestant Church had suggested."

On this Dr. Edward J. Drinkhouse, in his "History of Methodist Reform," which is a history of the Methodist Protestant Church, Vol. II, p. 468, says: "It seems that the Alabama and the Mississippi Conferences of the Church, at their previous sessions, had passed such resolutions of invitation; thus taking an initiative which, in its consummation, finally disregarded the theory of Mutual Rights and General Conference authority."

A committee of the Methodist Protestant General Conference reported that, "In the opinion of your committee, this General Conference has not authority to act in the premises, this power being alone with the people; but the commission they appointed are recommended and invited to confer with the Convention to be called for Montgomery in 1867, or, in default, the General Conference of the Church in May, 1870."

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in its Gen-

eral Conference, appointed the following commissioners to treat with similar commissioners if such be appointed by the Methodist Protestant Conference, namely: Bishops Pierce and McTyeire, and the Reverends Charles F. Deems, J. E. Evans, S. Register, N. Head, and L. M. Lee.

The action of the General Conference of the Church South, having been communicated to the Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, that body took reciprocal action and appointed the following commissioners:

From Maryland, Rev. S. B. Southerland, L. J. Cox, Jr.; from Virginia, Rev. J. G. Whitfield, C. W. Button; from North Carolina, Rev. W. H. Wills, G. J. Cherry; from Tennessee, Rev. B. F. Duggan; from Georgia, Rev. F. H. M. Henderson, J. Bass; from Alabama, Rev. F. L. B. Shaver, P. T. Graves; from Mississippi, Rev. P. H. Napier, P. Loper; and from North Mississippi, Rev. A. A. Houstan, W. R. Montgomery.

The two commissions convened on the 8th of May, 1867, at Montgomery, Alabama, and, on assembling, took some time for free consultation and an interchange of friendly expressions.

Bishop McTyeire declared that nothing essential separated the two Churches at that time and expressed the hope that they would wed and be one family; Dr. L. M. Lee said the separation in 1828 was a sad day for Methodism and that he had been laboring for a reunion; and the Rev. J. E. Evans coincided with what his colleagues had said and hoped the union would be consummated.

The Methodist Protestant Commissioners warmly

welcomed the representatives of the Church South, and agreed with them that a visible union of the two branches of Methodism was desirable, providing such a union could be on terms which were mutually agreeable.

Then came the formal propositions and the presentation of conditions.

The commissioners of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, presented the following proposition:

"We propose a formal and corporate union of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church. The separation originally took place because lay representation was denied. The principle being now conceded and incorporated into the economy of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, we think there is no insuperable bar to such union of the two bodies respectfully represented by us.

"We propose a union with your ministers, itinerant and local, and your members, each in their several relations, and entitled to all the rights and privileges common to our own ministers and members, under the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South."

The commissioners of the Methodist Protestant Church responded in a statement of "Terms of Union," containing fifteen stipulations:

"1. Strike out of the Church name the word *South*.

"2. If *Episcopal* be retained in the name, *Protestant* to be incorporated.

"3. Dispense with the presiding eldership.

"4. Have as many bishops as annual conferences.

"5. In the selection of new bishops, what are now our annual conferences shall have the privilege of nominating from their present members their first bishops, and the General Conference shall elect said nominees.

"6. Itinerant ministers to have the right of appeal from the stationing power.

"7. Maryland Conference, in the event of union, to be allowed to decide upon its own name, ministerial membership, and boundaries be not extended farther south than the states of Maryland and Delaware, and the District of Columbia and the station in Alexandria.

"8. Our system of trial of accused ministers and members, or its equivalent.

"9. No minister to be transferred from one Conference to another without his own consent and the consent of the Conference to which he is transferred.

"10. Local preachers and ministers to be put upon a par with itinerant preachers and ministers, in regard to eligibility to orders.

"11. Local ministers to be alike eligible with itinerant ministers to a seat in the General Conference.

"12. Each station, circuit, and mission to be allowed one delegate to the Annual Conference; in the former to be elected by the male members; in the two latter, by the quarterly conference.

"13. No veto power to be conceded to the bishops.

"14. Incorporate in the Discipline the following (Art. VIII, Sec. 5): The ministry and laymen shall deliberate in one body; but if, upon the final passage of any question, it be required by three members, the ministers and laymen shall vote separately, and the concurrence of a majority of both classes of representatives shall be necessary to constitute a vote of the Conference. A similar regulation shall be observed in the Annual Conference.

"15. In the Annual Conference the laity shall have

the right to participate in all the business, except such as relates to the trial of ministers and preachers."

Referring to the Methodist Protestant Convention of 1867, Doctor Drinkhouse says: "The overshadowing subject occupying the attention of the convention was the proposal from the Church South already cited. The Committee of Conference held numerous interviews with the commissioners of that Church, and the more they conferred the less the brethren seemed to be able to understand the interpretation placed upon the action of the Church South as made by the commissioners present. It slowly dawned upon them, however, after the first answer was made to their proposal. It covered fifteen points, made upon the supposition that the commissioners were empowered to 'settle terms of union. . . .'

"It is an open secret that several of these points were made by brethren opposed to the 'Union' altogether—riders to kill the bill."

The next day the two commissions met together, and the commissioners from the Church South replied in order to the terms proposed.

They said the word *South* could be eliminated from the title of the Church, but that to introduce the word *Protestant* in the name was unnecessary; that the presiding eldership was a matter requiring General Conference action; that there was a tendency in the Church to have a larger number of bishops; that stipulations as to electing bishops nominated by an Annual Conference was beyond the power of the commissioners of the Church South; that appeals from pastoral assignments by the appointing power would impair the effective supply of pastors; that it is safest

to leave the determination of the boundaries of the Maryland Annual Conference with the General Conference; that as to the matter of trials the two Churches had about the same system; that the tendency was to put itinerant and local preachers upon a par as to their eligibility for orders; that already a fair ratio of representation in the General Conference is allowed local preachers; that a too numerous representation in the General Conference would be cumbersome; that veto power by the bishops was a mooted question and was not under the control of the commissioners from the Church South; that a division of the vote in the General Conference was already provided for on a call of one-fifth, but that such a measure in the Annual Conference might embarrass its proceedings; and that the right of the laity to vote on all questions might safely rest with the General Conference.

This was the substance of the reply to the response of the commissioners of the Methodist Protestant Church by the representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Doctor Drinkhouse, commenting on this in his history, remarks that "The 'ecclesiastical finesse' developed on both sides. The commissioners made reply in order. And now it became clear even to hazy vision that what was proposed was not 'Union,' but Absorption. The ministers and officials would be received into the Church South and the members would be received also; but not a vanishing point was to be left of the Methodist Protestant Church as such.

"And yet over the reply which made this fact manifest the brethren higgled and disputed and took votes by ayes and nays and entered upon the journal

explanations of their votes, and a number of them finally uttered a protest against the whole farcical business. The brethren who in their individual and conferential capacity had presumed to speak for the whole Church in their letters and personal interviews with the bishops, etc., found themselves in an embarrassing position; they could not deliver the goods."

The Methodist Protestant General Convention then sitting in Montgomery considered three reports on this subject. The first contained the following:

"*Resolved*, That the whole subject be referred for final action to our several Annual Conferences, and that the president thereof be requested to announce the results to the commissioners of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, expressing the hope that the Conferences may act as a unit."

The second report was from a minority, and it recommended the acceptance of the terms proposed by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, "as liberal, hopeful, and indicative of an early affirmation of all the points of difference, and therefore we accept them and recommend to our Annual Conferences action in harmony with acceptance."

The third report was from a minority of one. In dissenting from the majority report, it says it "does not agree to abide the decision of the Conferences without the concurrence of at least a majority of the several Annual Conferences."

Finally the convention decided:

"That the convention take no decisive action at this time, but that the whole subject be held in abeyance and under advisement by the several Annual Confer-

ences, calmly awaiting the development and indications of Providence."

Doctor Drinkhouse remarks that "The commissioners of the Church South took their formal leave with courteous greetings and resolves, the hand-in-glove brethren relieving the disgust these commissioners could not altogether disguise, as much as possible. And so ended a fiasco as notable as that of the Non-Episcopal Union Convention of the brethren North and West, but attended with much more diastrous results. It is but fair to state that literally the bishops were beguiled into the part they took by the resolves of the Alabama, Mississippi, and Virginia Conferences. The fifteen points presented were never submitted by them to their Annual Conferences, as suggested, and the 'Union' of the two Churches was abandoned mutually. They soon began the work of 'taking into their Church' the preachers and people individually, and as Annual Conferences piecemeal, but always at the invitation of those who had predetermined to unite with them."

The negotiations proved futile and the project utterly failed, and to this day the Methodist Protestant Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, never have united.

But the remarkable fact that stands out most prominently in this connection is that in the very year it proposed union with the Methodist Protestant Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, rejected the advances towards union made by the representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

XVI

THE FORMATION OF THE METHODIST CHURCH

AS early as 1859 there was an initiative suggestion for the consolidation of the separated section of the Methodist Protestants in the North and West with the Wesleyan Connection of America.

In 1864, Dr. Hiram Mattison, who had withdrawn from the Methodist Episcopal Church and formed an independent church in the city of New York, in conjunction with representatives of other independent Methodist Churches, appointed a committee to confer with other non-Episcopal Methodists, with a view to effecting a union of all bodies coming under that head.

When the Civil War ended the proposition gained in popular favor. As Doctor Drinkhouse remarks: "'Union' was in the air among Methodists in this epoch. All of them had suffered losses from the ravages of the war, and seemed to be casting about to recoup themselves out of each other. . . . The non-Episcopal Methodists of the North and West would come together; yes, there were no differences among them to keep them apart, and they loved each other so dearly they could not keep from ecclesiastical wedlock."

A convention of non-Episcopal Methodists met and recommended the calling of a delegated assembly or

convention to meet in the month of May, 1866, in the city of Cincinnati, Ohio, which convention would have power to fix the basis of union and to determine the method of bringing about the said union.

In the interim Dr. Hiram Mattison returned to the Methodist Episcopal Church. However, the Convention was held in Cincinnati, May 9–16, 1866.

When "the non-Episcopal Methodist Convention" was organized it was found that the majority was composed of the separated Methodist Protestants in the North and West, including West Virginia. From the Northern and Western Methodists came one hundred and seven delegates, from the Wesleyan Methodist Connection, twenty-eight, and four delegates from three independent churches, making a total of one hundred and thirty-nine. In addition the names of a considerable number of honorary members were entered. No representatives were sent by the Free Methodists. One of the Wesleyans was elected the permanent president.

On the second day the Committee on Basis of Union presented certain Elementary Principles which were essentially those of the Methodist Protestant Church slightly modified, which principles were unanimously adopted.

In regard to the title of the new and combined Church there was not the same unanimity. Two titles were proposed. The delegates from the Wesleyan Connection wanted the new name to be the "United Methodist Church," while the representatives from the separated Methodist Protestant body wanted it called "The Methodist Church." Finally the latter title was adopted by a vote of one hundred and seven to twenty-

four, and the new ecclesiastical combination was started on its career as "The Methodist Church," the first and only Methodistic body to carry that as its legal title.

One subject brought for the consideration of the Convention was in regard to "secret oath-bound societies." This was not only presented but by some it was strongly urged that something be incorporated in the church law against membership in such organizations. The matter gave much trouble, but the Convention refused to make the prohibition a part of the corporate law of the new Church, and passed an act in which the preamble declared that "Whereas this Convention has left all moral questions with the local churches, recognizing their right to determine their own tests of membership," etc., it would not be proper for the Convention to pass a law on such a matter.

In fact it was essentially the same avoidance of the issue as the old Methodist Protestant Church in its General Conferences put in their decisions in reference to slaveholding by its ministers and members, and somewhat like the decisions of certain General Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church on the slavery question in a certain stormy period, when it pointed to the peculiar civil laws of some states.

A Constitution which was very similar to the Constitution of the Methodist Protestant Church, as revised by the Convention of 1858, was adopted, and a committee was appointed to prepare a Book of Discipline to harmonize with the Constitution just agreed upon, which committee was ordered to report to the first General Conference of "The Methodist Church," to be held in Cleveland, Ohio, on the third Wednesday in the month of May, 1867.

Thus the new non-Episcopal "Methodist Church" was formed and moved out into the future.

One year later, in May, 1867, and in the city of Cleveland, the first General Conference of "The Methodist Church" convened, and continued in session from the fifteenth to the twenty-second day inclusive.

Out of eighty-six elected representatives, twenty-five were absent, and only four ministers and three laymen of the Wesleyan Connection were officially present. Doctor Drinkhouse observes that "The whole denomination had repudiated the Union. . . . Less than a dozen of their ministers came to the Methodist Church, and, as already recorded, a number of their leading men returned to the Methodist Episcopal Church."

The new form of Discipline, after some amendment, was adopted. One proposition which was accepted read as follows:

"Each Annual Conference respectively shall have power to make its own rules and regulations in regard to stationing its ministers and preachers, provided it shall make no rule inconsistent with the Constitution of the Methodist Church."

The statistics seem to show a membership of nearly 50,000, but the union appeared to be one of form rather than fact, as Joel Martin, in his "Wesleyan Manual; or History of Wesleyan Methodism," says: "In the final outcome the Methodist Protestants generally went into the new organizatian which took the name of the 'Methodist Church,' while the Wesleyan Methodists pretty generally remained out of it and maintained their own denominational identity."

XVII

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH RENEWS ITS PROFFER OF UNION WITH THE CHURCH SOUTH AND MAKES ADVANCES TOWARDS OTHER BODIES

ONCE again, namely, in 1869, at their regular Episcopal Conference, held at Meadville, Pennsylvania, the Methodist Episcopal bishops decided to make another effort for union, and deputed two of their number, namely, Bishops Morris and Janes, to meet the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at their regular meeting to be held a few weeks later, and with them to confer concerning "methods of reunion."

With these deputies the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church sent a written communication, in which they said:

"Dear Brethren,—It seems to us, that as the division of those Churches of our country which are of like faith and order has been productive of evil, so the reunion of them would be productive of good. As the main cause of separation has been removed, so has the chief obstacle to restoration.

"It is fitting that the Methodist Church, which began the disunion, should not be the last to achieve the reunion, . . . which both the love of country and of religion invoke, and which the providence of God seems to render inevitable at no distant day.

"We are aware that there are difficulties in the way. . . . We have, therefore, deputed our colleagues, Morris and Janes, to confer with you, alike as to the propriety, practicability, and methods of reunion, . . . to see the several parts united upon a foundation honorable to all, stable as truth, and harmonious with the fundamental law of religion."

This did not bring a favorable response. Commenting on this episode, the Rev. John H. Brunner, D. D., a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and President of Hiwassee College, East Tennessee,—observes that "The message was delivered. Well said, and well done! But union was the last thing these Southern bishops wished to talk about. . . . Here was a pivotal point in history. Emphatically this was a time for concerting 'methods' to remove the difficulties between the two bodies. But the overtures contained too much, and that 'much' was *union*."

Bishop Matthew Simpson, in his "Cyclopedia of Methodism," says: "In April, 1869, the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church appointed Bishops Janes and Simpson to visit and confer with the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, who met in St. Louis the next month. The visit was made and a friendly correspondence ensued, but without any definite action."

Doctor Myers, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in his book entitled "The Disruption of the Methodist Episcopal Church," gives an account of this interview. He says:

"In 1869 the Southern bishops met in St. Louis, where they were unexpectedly visited by Bishops Janes and Simpson, commissioned by the Episcopal College of

the Methodist Episcopal Church to bear fraternal greetings. They were self-moved to do this, believing that, as 'chief pastors,' it became them to suggest a reunion of the two Churches. They were received with the utmost respect, and their communication answered courteously but candidly. The Southern bishops did not conceive 'reunion' the first question to be considered; it must be preceded by the establishment of fraternal feelings and relations between the two Churches. They cited the final words of Doctor Pierce in 1848, which, in 1850, had been adopted as the language of the Church South.

"'If the offer of fraternal relations is ever made upon the basis of the Plan of Separation of 1844, the Church South will cordially entertain the proposition,' Doctor Pierce wrote; and they add, 'You cannot expect us to say less than this, that the words of our rejected delegate are our words.' And again: 'Allow us, in all kindness, brethren, to remind you, and to keep the important fact of history prominent, that we separated from you in no sense in which you did not separate from us. The separation was by compact, and mutual, and nearer approaches to each other can be conducted, with hope of successful issue, only on this basis.'

"They also called attention 'to the conduct of some of the missionaries and agents sent into' the South, and to their 'course in taking possession of some of our houses of worship;' and granting it not impossible 'that our own people may not have been in every instance without blame towards you,' they add: 'If any offenses against the law of love, committed by those under our appointment, any aggressions upon your just privileges and rights, are properly represented

to us, we shall stand ready, by all the authority and influence we have, to restrain and correct them.'"

Doctor Myers then remarks: "There was no response."

Just what he intends by this is not evident. If he means that then and afterwards the Methodist Episcopal bishops made no reply but received the statement in silence, such an assertion seems improbable and does not harmonize with Bishop Simpson's remark that "a friendly correspondence ensued."

For the Church South bishops to say to their brother bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1869 "that we separated from you in no sense in which you did not separate from us" was rhetorical and striking in its form, but it was not an accurate statement. It is an admission that they of the South did separate but it is not evidence that the Methodist Episcopal Church separated from the Church South. That is merely an assertion.

That the founders of the Church South did the separating is a plain fact proven by their own records. The representatives of the thirteen Southern Conferences, meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, in May, 1845, formally declared that they then and there dissolved their connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church, as the resolution read, we "do solemnly declare the jurisdiction hitherto exercised over said Annual Conferences (in the slaveholding states), by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, entirely dissolved," "and are constituted a separate ecclesiastical connexion."

At that time the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was not in session, but by its ad-

journment had gone out of existence about a year before, so the expression was equivalent to saying that these Southern Conferences withdrew from the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and their use of the title of the denomination shows that they recognized the fact that the Methodist Episcopal Church was in existence at that time and that it remained in existence after they declared their relation dissolved. They voted their connection with it dissolved, and, so, separated from it, but the old Church remained the same Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

That was the only dissolution that took place. The Southern Convention did the separating, but the Methodist Episcopal Church never went into an organizing convention like the delegates from "the slaveholding states" to organize or reorganize itself, or voted to dissolve its connection with the Church South. It was, therefore, inaccurate for the bishops of the latter Church to say to the bishops of the Continuing Methodist Episcopal Church that the Church South separated from the old Church in no sense in which the Methodist Episcopal Church did not separate from it. The dissolving was by one side and by one side only.

The remark in question was written about twenty-five years after the separation by the Southern Conferences and the intervening years had been a period of intense feeling, and strenuous events may have clouded the memory and affected the judgment, while with the excitement still fresh it was difficult to see facts in their true perspective.

Nothing daunted, the bishops of the Methodist

Episcopal Church persisted in their efforts to bring the two Churches together.

The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1868, had considered the question of union between Methodist Churches. From the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, then in session, had come a telegram asking "whether a deputation from that body, bearing proposals for fraternization and union, would be received." Upon the announcement, the Reverend Dr. Daniel Curry moved "That we will cordially welcome a delegation from the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church for consultation and ultimate union of that Church with our own," and this was adopted.

The next day a telegram was received from the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, "giving information that a committee from that body, bearing proposals of affiliation and union, would be sent to this General Conference," and a committee of reception was appointed.

The same day came a memorial signed by eight clergymen of the Protestant Episcopal Church "praying this General Conference to appoint a commission of Bishops and Clergy, to meet a similar commission to be appointed by the General Convention of their Church, with reference to a union of the two Churches in one communion."

This was referred to a special committee.

A committee was appointed "to receive, consider and report upon, to this Conference, any proposals" from the two African Churches "for union with the Methodist Episcopal Church."

When the report of the committee to confer with

the delegate from the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was under consideration, it was moved that, in case of union, the said Church "shall be entitled to a *pro rata* representation in the Episcopal Board of the Methodist Episcopal Church" but this was laid on the table. The Conference favorably entertained the proposition for union but adopted a reference to a joint commission to report to the next General Conference.

On motion of Gilbert Haven it was "*Resolved*, That the Commission ordered by the General Conference to confer with a like Commission from the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, to arrange for the union of that body with our own, be also empowered to treat with a similar Commission from any other Methodist Church that may desire a like union."

This was broad enough to cover every denomination in the Methodistic family and was so intended.

In regard to the request of the Protestant Episcopal clergyman it was ordered "That a committee of seven be appointed, who shall constitute a committee of Correspondence on Church Union, who shall reply to the letters addressed to this body on this subject, and who shall also carry on such other correspondence thereon as they may deem necessary, and report to the next session of the General Conference."

Union was in the air and the General Conference was making the broadest provisions on that subject.

The General Conference also voted in favor of a joint commission with the Evangelical Association, "to confer together and see if they can agree on a basis of union, and report their action to the General Conference of 1872."

It is to be observed that not one of these proposed unions ever was consummated.

This General Conference adopted the following: "That as the disruption of ecclesiastical and fraternal bonds between Christian Churches North and South, and especially in our own Church, had the effect largely to remove the moral obstructions to the late war and precipitate that fearful tragedy, so now also would the restoration of fraternal harmony and fellowship among all Christian bodies greatly draw together in good-will and charity the elements of civil society, and hasten the restoration of the Federal Union to its former proportions, and to more than its former beauty and perfection; and we do, therefore, earnestly commend to all Christians especially to cultivate towards each other, and towards all men, the spirit of peace, gentleness, forbearance, and of charity and good-will, particularly reminding all ministers of our own connection of our solemn ordination vow, that 'we will maintain and set forward, as much as lieth in us, quietness, peace, and love among all Christian people, and especially among them that are, or shall be, committed to our charge.'"

This deliverance presented a profound philosophy for it is plain that when Christian denominations lost their national nature and portions of them became sectional, limiting themselves to a special section of the country, they weakened the bonds that bound them to the whole country and the tendency was to isolate them from the rest of the nation. Politically that had a disintegrating trend.

On the other hand denominations having a country-wide unity tended to preserve and strengthen national unity. Hence "the restoration of fraternal harmony

and fellowship" in the coming together of separated members of the same denominational family would "greatly draw together in good-will and charity the elements of civil society" and strengthen the solidarity of the nation.

The deliverance evidently referred, particularly, to the unfortunate withdrawal of the thirteen Southern Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1845, and with great plainness expressed a strong desire for the restoration of denominational unity. It would be difficult to conceive of anything more dignified and more direct.

Following up the spirit of union manifested by the General Conference of 1868, and under the comprehensive authority given the Commission which was given its commission, "empowered to treat with a similar Commission from any other Methodist Church that may desire a like union," the Commission decided to approach the General Conference of the Church South through two representatives, and "the Commission appointed by the General Conference requested Bishop Janes and Dr. W. L. Harris to attend the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at Memphis, in 1870."

The authorization for the two representatives was perfectly legitimate, and, duly empowered, they went to the General Conference of the Church South, which met in the year just specified.

The representatives who thus appeared in behalf of the Methodist Episcopal Church were conspicuous men. One was a bishop and later the other became a bishop. Dr. William L. Harris was the secretary of the Methodist Episcopal General Conference and at the General

Conference of 1868 had been elected First Assistant Corresponding Secretary of the Missionary Society.

Bishop Edmund S. Janes in a sense seemed to link the two Churches together, for he had been elected to the Episcopate in the General Conference of 1844, and largely by Southern votes.

These representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church presented a written paper to the General Conference of the Church South, in which they said:

"There are now no sufficient reasons why a union may not be effected on terms equally honorable to all; . . . appoint a similar commission to meet with us previous to our next General Conference. . . .

"We are, dear brethren, yours in Christ Jesus."

After the communication had been read, Bishop Janes followed with some explanatory remarks, in which he observed:

"It was the intention, in a dignified and delicate manner, to make this communication, and it was not intended to be heralded in the papers. . . . The act of the General Conference was limited. . . . I do not understand that we are authorized to take any definite action, but to learn what embarrassments are in the way of union, and to ascertain in what manner union may be effected. I do not think any of us can expect that perfect organic union can be effected at once without much negotiation; the history of the past five years will not justify us in entertaining such a hope, and yet we do believe that the prayer of Christ will be heard, and the day come when His people shall be one."

The result of this fraternal approach was that the right of those who appeared in behalf of the Methodist Episcopal Church was challenged on the ground that

the representatives were not duly commissioned and empowered to treat for union, and the challenge was made by the Reverend John C. Keener, D. D., one of the leading ministers of the Church South, and he challenged the overture "on the ground that the commissioners lacked needful authority."

The matter was referred to a committee and it brought in an adverse report, and the paper adopted by this General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, contained the following as its fourth resolution:

"*Resolved*, moreover, That if this distinguished commission were fully clothed with authority to treat with us for union, it is the judgment of this Conference that the true interests of the Church of Christ require and demand the maintenance of our separate and distinct organization."

In 1870, the General Conference of the Church South also passed this among other resolutions:

"*Resolved*, That the action of our bishops in their last Annual Meeting, in St. Louis, in response to the message from the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, has the full indorsement of this General Conference, and accurately defines our position in reference to any overtures which may proceed from that Church having in them an official and proper recognition of that body."

Thus the General Conference of the Church South adopted and promulgated the utterances of the bishops of that Church made in response to the advances of the Methodist Episcopal bishops at the St. Louis meeting.

Just what that meant we are told by a leading writer of the Southern Church.

Referring to the action of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1870, Doctor Myers, of that Church, in his book entitled "The Disruption of the Methodist Episcopal Church," says:

"Here, then, is the platform on which Southern Methodism stands—propounded by Doctor Pierce in 1848, confirmed by the General Conference in 1850, reasserted by the bishops in 1869, and again confirmed *unanimously* in 1870 by a full General Conference of lay and clerical delegates; namely, her foundation, as a separate ecclesiastical organization, was, by authority, laid in the Plan of Separation; and this fact must be recognized as the basis of a permanent peace and cordial fraternity."

That meant that the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, would neither have union nor fraternity with the Methodist Episcopal Church until it accepted the interpretation the Church South placed upon the acts of the General Conference of 1844, and particularly on what the South persisted in calling the "Plan of Separation," and to say that the Methodist Episcopal Church separated from the Church South just as the Church South had separated from the Methodist Episcopal Church. This was a hard ultimatum for the old Church for from the beginning it had denied this interpretation and regarded that sort of a double separation as an absurdity and contrary to the facts.

The response to this overture for union made by the Methodist Episcopal representatives was a positive rejection by this General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the emphatic declaration "that the true interests of the Church of Christ [not merely of the Church South, but the whole of

"the Church of Christ"] require and demand the maintenance of our separate and distinct organization," and this was years after the close of the Civil War and the extinction of slavery, which, therefore, could no longer be a live issue.

Commenting on this, the Church South author, Doctor Brunner, says: "The issue was joined; the *Northern Church for union; the Southern against it!* John Christian Keener, having championed the Southern view, was made a bishop on the spot."

Summarizing these events we find:

The bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1865, had publicly pronounced in favor of the union of their Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and this action evoked the reply from the bishops of the latter Church that they could "anticipate no good result from even entertaining the subject of reunion."

In 1866 two great Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, namely, the New York East and the New York, communicated with the General Conference of the Church South, and while that body agreed to a day of prayer it declined to accept the suggestion to create a commission on the subject of the union of the Churches, but reiterated their adherence to their "separate and distinct organization."

In 1869 the Methodist Episcopal bishops designated two of their number to meet the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for the purpose of conferring "as to the propriety, practicability, and methods of reunion," but it resulted in failure.

The next year, 1870, the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, convened and to it the Commission of the General Conference of the

Methodist Episcopal Church sent a deputation of two honored men, which deputation proposed the union of the two Churches and the appointment of commissions of Conference. The proffer was declined, the authority of the deputation was denied, and the Conference declared in favor of maintaining the "separate and distinct organization."

Thus all these varied and continuous efforts by various parties, speaking for the Methodist Episcopal Church in favor of the union of two Churches, seemed to be fruitless and to have resulted in absolute failure.

No attempt will be made to deny the right of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to remain a "separate and distinct organization" if it so desired. On the other hand no one can deny the earnestness and sincerity of those who undertook to speak for the Methodist Episcopal Church in the effort for union.

The aggregate result of the attempts was enough to discourage average mortals, but the leaders of the Methodist Episcopal Church did not despair.

XVIII

A NEW COLORED CHURCH

IN the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1866, when the body declined the advances towards union made by the Methodist Episcopal Church, and yet opened negotiations looking towards union with the Methodist Protestant Church, it also adopted measures to prepare for the organization of the colored ministers and members of the Church South into an independent colored denomination.

This was soon after the close of the Civil War and the matter came up in the first General Conference of the Church South, following the close of that conflict.

Slavery having been destroyed, and the status of the colored people in the South having been changed, the Church South seemed to conclude that it would be better for the people of color to have ecclesiastical independence also. So the Church South General Conference, in 1866, decided that if its colored membership desired to be made independent, the bishops, "if, and when, their godly judgment approved, should organize them into an independent body."

Following this authorization the bishops of the Church South, in the year immediately after the General Conference of 1866, formed a number of colored Annual Conferences, or as Bishop McTyeire, of the

Church South, more specifically states, the colored people "were set off into circuits, districts, and Annual Conferences."[1]

This arrangement proved acceptable and in a little while the preachers in these new Conferences and the members of the Churches within their bounds expressed a desire for an independent Church organization, and the desire was based on the ground that it would be better for both white and colored people to have their own separate Churches and schools and for each to have ecclesiastical independence and separation.[2]

The preachers in the colored Annual Conferences, therefore, requested the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to appoint a commission from the said General Conference to confer with delegated colored men representing the colored Conferences.

The result was that the Church South General Conference set off its colored ministers and members and organized them into a new denomination under the title "The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America," which was the name chosen by the colored people themselves.

The new body was constituted at a convention held in Jackson, Tennessee, in the month of December, 1870. Bishops Paine and McTyeire presided at this "Conventional General Conference," as it was called, and doubtless guided the convention by their counsel, at least in a general way.

The "Conventional General Conference" of the new Church adopted the Book of Discipline of the Church

[1] Bishop McTyeire, "History of Methodism," p. 671.

[2] Bishop Holsey, in *The Independent*, March 5, 1891.

South, without any material alterations, or, as Bishop McTyeire puts it, "The Discipline of the parent body was adopted, without material alterations." [1]

This organizing General Conference also elected two colored ministers to be bishops, namely, W. H. Miles and R. H. Vanderhorst and they were set apart for the episcopal office by Bishops Paine and McTyeire of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Jackson, Tennessee, in December, 1870.[2]

Bishop McTyeire states that "The General Conference, which authorized this proceeding, also ordered that all church property that had been acquired, held, and used for Methodist negroes in the past be turned over to them by Quarterly Conferences and trustees." [3]

The amount of property thus turned over to the new colored denomination has been variously estimated at $1,000,000 to $1,500,000.

The body "determined to elect bishops for life. . . . Membership in the body is restricted to negroes. The Discipline forbids the using of the church houses for political speeches and meetings." [4]

We may form an idea of the number of colored people who went out from the Church South in 1870 from the fact that the colored membership in that Church in 1866 was 78,742.[5]

That it has had a very considerable growth is shown by the fact that in 1913 the Colored Methodist Episco-

[1] Bishop McTyeire's "History of Methodism," p. 671.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 671. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 671.

[4] Dr. J. M. Buckley, "A History of Methodists in the United States" (The American Church History Series), New York, 1896, p. 598.

[5] Bishop McTyeire, "History of Methodism," p. 670.

pal Church had 2,901 ministers, 2,857 churches, and 234,721 communicant members.[1]

When this new colored Church was constituted practically all the colored Methodists in the United States of America were in independent colored Churches excepting those who were in the Methodist Episcopal Church who probably numbered less than two hundred thousand at that time.

[1] Dr. H. K. Carroll in "World Almanac" for 1914.

XIX

CONSOLIDATION IN CANADA

AS has been seen the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1828 conceded the right of independence to its Conference in Canada and set it off to be a separate Church, and it became the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada.

As such, in its entirety, it maintained a separate existence only a short time.

In that period there was also another Methodism in the British part of North America, so that while the Canadian Methodist Episcopal Church was in Upper Canada, British Wesleyans were in Lower Canada and Nova Scotia, for the British Wesleyan Conference had sent missionaries from Great Britain to these parts of the British possessions in North America.

Even while the American Methodist Episcopal Church administered in Canada there was an understanding between the Methodist Episcopalians and the Wesleyans to the effect that the former would work in Upper Canada while the latter should operate in Lower Canada.

The British patriotic spirit which had led to the detachment of the Canada Conference from the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, and the ecclesiastical attachment of the Canadian Methodist Episcopalians to Great Britain, soon led to a rapprochement between some in the new Methodist

Episcopal Church of Canada and the Wesleyans who were directly related to the Conference in England.

It was recognized that Canada was a province of Great Britain and quite a number reasoned that the proper thing would be to have one Methodism and that of the British Wesleyan type. So, as early as 1832, when the Methodist Episcopal Conference in Canada had been independent only about four years, a correspondence on the subject of union began between the missionaries of the British Wesleyan body in Lower Canada, and leading ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Upper Canada.

The result was that a majority of the Canadian Methodist Episcopalians in the Conference concluded that it was wise for them to affiliate with the Wesleyan Methodists and make one body of British Wesleyans in these British provinces. So, in 1833, the Methodist Episcopal Conference in Canada agreed to unite with the Wesleyans in Canada, and the whole movement evidently grew out of the war of 1812–1814 between the United States and Great Britain.

Those who went into this combination from the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada gave up the Methodist Episcopal title, and the united body took the Wesleyan Methodist name, changed the Episcopal polity, and conformed to the Discipline and mode of the British Wesleyan Conference, were connected with the parent body in England, and, as an affiliated, or, to some extent, a dependent Conference, received a President from the body in Great Britain.

However, the act carrying the Methodist Episcopal Conference of Canada into this combination had been consummated without any formal and direct consultation

with the people of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada. As a consequence there was considerable dissatisfaction with the transaction which by some was declared to be illegal.

A forceful minority denied the right of the Conference to make such a radical change which amounted in intent to the destruction of the Church, and asserted that it was a violation of the agreement between the Canadian Conference and the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America which had permitted, granted, and recognized the independence of the Canadian Methodist Episcopalians.

These dissatisfied parties who preferred the American plan and who protested against having their Church taken away from them and their being merged into another body, demanded that their own organization, the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada, be continued.

Representing these persons, certain superannuated ministers and local preachers, holding these views, met in June, 1834, and decided to continue the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada, and the outcome was that this Methodist Episcopal Church thus continued took a new start and grew to considerable proportions.

There also appeared another form of Methodism called The New Connection.

These different forms of Methodism worked side by side for another generation and more, and, then, in 1874, a union was effected between the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada, the British Wesleyans in Canada, and the New Connection Methodists in the same country, and the new combination was called The Methodist Church of Canada.

In this consolidation there were modifications of polity, thus instead of presiding elders appeared the title Chairmen of Districts, the title Bishops was dropped, while the episcopal idea appeared in a modified form of superintendency with Superintendent as the title of the chief executive officer.

In Canada there were also, and are, what are called Primitive Methodists and the Primitive Methodist body remains distinct.

There remains another body of Methodists in Canada which perpetuates the title Episcopal. It, likewise, had a relationship to the great Republic to the South.

When slavery existed in the United States of America, colored people fled from that servitude, and, passing through the Northern States, settled in Canada.

What ecclesiastical training they had received they carried with them into their new country and as a result organized a Methodist Episcopal Church, or, more exactly, constituted a Conference in connection with the African Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States.

This colored body became independent in 1856, and adopted as its name The British Methodist Episcopal Church.

This Church has two Conferences, the Ontario and the Nova Scotia. It has also a mission in Bermuda. Though not a very large body its members have preferred the independence of their own color.

XX

UNION OF THE METHODIST AND THE METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCHES

THE union of the antislavery wing of the Methodist Protestant Church with the Wesleyan Connection of America was not a complete union and had not the success anticipated in the formation of "The Methodist Church."

Practical difficulties developed in the attempted readjustment. Thus as one historian states: "In the West the gravity of the situation as to the 'Methodist' Church confronted the brethren. The old name (Methodist Protestant) was graven in stone on tablets facing nearly all the church property and in all the deeds. It was not found an easy legality to change the name in the chartered funds and institutions; the reason for making it and, much more, for retaining it, had passed away; Doctor Brown and Doctor Collier, in the *Methodist Recorder*, advocated a return to the Methodist Protestant name, in June, 1870, and others united in discussing the proposal."

The second General Conference of the Methodist Church was held in 1871. The record reads: "Minutes of the Second General Conference of the Methodist Church (formerly Methodist Protestant), held at Pittsburgh, Pa., May 17–27, 1871."

A resolution was offered: "That the committee on

legislation be instructed to inquire whether the change of name from Methodist Protestant to that of Methodist Church does not require a more particular statement of the steps taken to bring about that change, with the view of more fully assisting in litigation in regard to church property."

Fraternal messengers from the Maryland Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church were received and heard, as were fraternal messengers from the Methodist Episcopal Church. One of the latter was Dr. S. M. Merrill, who the next year was elected a bishop.

The General Conference appointed five fraternal messengers to the ensuing General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church. This was significant.

Another significant fact was the report of the committee on Methodistic Union, in which appeared the following: "In the love of the Saviour, and by the precious memories of those honored servants of God, who were founders of the Methodist Protestant Church, we invite our brethren to meet us in an effort to effect union of the two Churches. We recommend that the fraternal delegates appointed by the General Conference be constituted a Commission to receive any propositions looking towards union that may be made by the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, and report the same to the next General Conference of the Methodist Church. We also hope that the literature of both Churches will be freely interchanged."

The signs indicated a drawing together and pointed towards a combination.

In the next General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church held in Lynchburg, Va., in May, 1874, the "Reverend Dr. Wesley Kenney, from the

General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was introduced, and addressed the Conference fraternally and officially," thus showing at least the desire of the Methodist Episcopal Church for fraternal and close relations with the Methodist Protestant Church which, at that time, was mainly in the South, though there were a few representatives from Pennsylvania, Indiana, Iowa, and Colorado.

From the Methodist Church fraternal greetings were brought by the Reverend Alexander Clark, editor, and James Robison, publisher, of the *Methodist Recorder*.

Fraternity had come to the front and with it came the suggestion of organic union, and a special committee presented a report in which appeared the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That a committee of nine persons be appointed by this General Conference to confer with any like commission from any Methodist body in America who may signify a desire to confer with them upon the subject of union with the Methodist Protestant Church; and especially with a committee of nine, to be appointed by the General Conference of the Methodist Church, which has made overtures to us for a reunion, believing it to be the desire of the majority of the members of the Methodist Church to effect a union of the Methodist and Methodist Protestant Churches, upon terms which shall be alike agreeable and honorable to each; and to submit the terms of union to the General Convention hereinbefore provided for."

This was adopted "with great unanimity."

The report also provided for the holding of a General Convention to take into consideration "certain changes in the Constitution of the Church," which convention

was to meet at Abingdon, Virginia, on the first Friday in May, 1878.

Not one of the commissioners appointed by the General Conference of the Methodist Church appeared at Lynchburg and the reason given was that the Methodist Protestant General Conference of 1870 had stricken out the authorization of commissioners to meet commissioners appointed by the Methodist General Conference of 1871 to "receive any proposition looking towards union that might be made" but not to propose any.

Dr. John Scott, of the Methodist Church, has said: "There is one amusing thing, however, which cannot fail to be noticed in connection with the action of each of the parties to the proposed union, and that is the caution taken to prevent the impression that *it* was the party that first proposed the union."

Dr. Edward J. Drinkhouse, elected editor of the *Methodist Protestant* at this General Conference of 1874, has written some very pertinent remarks regarding the situation at that time. He says: "It was the gloomiest period in the history of the Methodist Protestant Church, and was felt by the representatives at Lynchburg. Then were revealed the devastating effects of the aborted union movement with the Church South. The condition of the Book Concern and periodical was critical in the extreme. After the greenback issues of the Civil War, and the inflation of artificial values, there came the necessary reaction, and the period of 1872–1876 was one of depreciation and well-nigh panic. All the Churches shared in the depression, and, as is the case in times of discouragement, they cast about for helps;

and it inaugurated among the Methodists in particular the era of fraternity and 'Union.' It developed a marvellous tenacity and fidelity to principles at the same time, and, if the writer were disposed to claim special providential oversight, it is apparent that nothing but such oversight saved the Methodist Protestant Church, in its disunited sections, from absorption, and proclaimed its mission among the Churches not yet accomplished. With the best motives ecclesiastical selfishness is capable of, not a few of the prominent ministers were baited to change their Church relations. The futility of such a struggle, as Churches, was pointed out, and the fatuity of preachers, whose abilities would command ample temporal support, still adhering, with the love of personal sacrifice, to a theory of Church government, insidiously urged."

Union, however, was approaching.

The General Conference of the Methodist Church which met in Princeton, Illinois, May 19–31, 1875, had the matter of union squarely before it.

Several propositions for union for the Methodist Church and the Methodist Protestant Church were made by members of the General Conference, and these propositions were referred to a committee on Methodist Union. Letters were received from one of the commissioners of the Methodist Protestant Church and from two fraternal messengers from the General Conference of that body, and another fraternal messenger was present "and made a winning address, hoping that the divided stream of the Church would soon be united."

Bishop Janes of the Methodist Episcopal Church was introduced and delivered an hour's address on fraternity

and union, distinctly favoring the organic union of all branches of Methodism in the United States, and the Reverend Dr. William Hunter, the regular fraternal delegate from the same Church, spoke in the same vein. To this a response was made by the Reverend A. H. Bassett in behalf of the General Conference, in which address he suggested that "the mission of the Reform Church was not yet accomplished." Fraternal messengers were appointed to the ensuing General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church as proof of the brotherly regard of the Methodist Church.

The supreme act of this General Conference was the adoption of the report of "the Committee on Methodistic Union," the most important part of which was the following:

"Inasmuch as the cause for suspension of official relations by the Conferences of the North now represented in this General Conference is now entirely removed by the providence of God, and the suspension having from the first been declared to be only contingent upon the continuance of the cause complained of. And whereas, furthermore, the General Conference of the South, assembled at Lynchburg, Va., May, 1874, did in accordance with mutual and reciprocal advances for reunion elect nine commissioners, to meet nine coördinate commissioners expected to be appointed by this General Conference now in session, to deliberate together and devise plans for reunion alike honorable and desirable to each; therefore this committee unanimously recommend the election of nine persons as commissioners for said purpose."

The slave question was the cause of the division originally, but now slavery itself was dead, and the

cause of the division having been eliminated, there was nothing to prevent the Methodist Protestant Church and the Methodist Church coming together as an organic unity.

The Methodist General Conference in the report of the Committee on Union took another important action which was a declaration against "the policy of absorption in the Methodist Episcopal Church," and among the last resolves of this General Conference was a respectful declination of the overtures from the Methodist Episcopal Church, in which the Conference said: "We deem it our bounden duty to adhere to our distinctive organization," etc.

The nine commissioners having been appointed it was decided to have an early consultation with the nine commissioners of the Methodist Protestant Church, and by mutual agreement a call was issued for an initial meeting at the First Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on the 22d of October in the same year, 1875.

On that date and in that place the commissioners of both Churches met, and after a day's deliberation the subcommittee reported a Basis of Union. According to this basis the title "Methodist Church" was to be dropped and the name of the united or reunited Church was to be "The Methodist Protestant Church," and the ratio of representation in each class was to be one in every thousand members. Having finished this part of the work the joint commission adopted the following: "Resolved that a Convention of the Methodist Protestant and Methodist Churches be held in Baltimore the second Friday in May, 1877, to consummate the whole work."

In the meantime the General Conference of the

Methodist Episcopal Church convened in the city of Baltimore, in May, 1876, and fraternal delegates from both the Methodist and the Methodist Protestant Churches were present and delivered fraternal addresses.

The Annual Conferences of the Methodist Protestant and the Methodist Churches quite promptly voted that the proposed Conventions be called, and on the 11th of May, 1877, the General Convention of the Methodist Protestant Church met in the East Baltimore Church, on Fayette Street, Baltimore, and the General Convention of the Methodist Church met at the same time in the West Baltimore Church on Green Street in the same city.

Seventy-one representatives from the Methodist Protestant Church were present, and seventy-eight from the Methodist Church. The full list of selected representatives was one hundred and three from the Methodist Protestant Church, and one hundred and eleven from the Methodist Church, so there were thirty-two absentees from the former Church, and thirty-three from the latter.

Each body appointed a conference committee, and the Joint Committee of Conference submitted the following:

"*Resolved* 1. That the Basis of Union agreed upon by the Joint Commission of the Methodist Protestant and Methodist Churches, at Pittsburgh, Pa., be adopted, and that we interpret that Basis of Union on the condition of receiving members into the Church to be substantially the same as is now in the *New Edition* of the Methodist Book of Discipline—the third item, relative to children, having been inadvertently omitted in the published Basis of Union.

"*Resolved* 2. That the matter of suffrage and eligibility to office be left to the Annual Conferences respectively,—*Provided*, That each Annual Conference shall be entitled to representation on the same ratio, in the General Conference; *And provided*, That no rule shall be passed which shall infringe the right of suffrage or eligibility to office.

"*Resolved* 3. That this Joint Committee of Conference recommend to the General Convention of the Methodist Protestant Church, and to the General Convention of the Methodist Church, now in session, the immediate Organic Union of the Methodist Protestant and Methodist Churches—upon the Basis of Union set forth in this report."

This report was adopted unanimously by the Methodist Convention on the 15th of May, and, the next day, by the Methodist Protestant Convention by a yea and nay vote of sixty yeas to five nays.

In the Methodist Convention on the same day the following paper was agreed to:

"That in the consummation of the union of the Methodist and Methodist Protestant Churches, the bodies, which are parties thereto, take with them all of the boards, institutions, and property belonging to the General Conferences represented in the two Conventions now assembled, or in the Joint Convention. That this Convention appoint a committee of three persons to inquire into, and make provision for, any alteration that may be deemed necessary or important to make conformity and uniformity in all of the titles of property and boards to the new conditions and relations thus assumed."

A Joint Committee on Formal Union had arranged

for the two Conventions to come together in the Starr Methodist Protestant Church, in Baltimore, and each Convention selected its own marshal. On the fifth day, namely May 16th, each Convention started from the church where it had been meeting. As one of the participants tells us:

"The Methodist Protestant Convention, about 4:30 P. M. of the fifth day, marched to the corner of Lombard and Fremont Streets, about half-way to the Methodist Convention at Green and Lombard Streets, who marched to the same junction. Then two by two, under the direction of the marshals, they joined, one from either Convention, and so proceeded to the Starr Church, a united body. The spectacle attracted much attention from the citizens as well it might. The two Conventions had been noticed in all the secular papers of the country, even the large New York dailies giving up space to them, while the family of *Christian Advocates*, North and South, not wont to advertise anything Methodist Protestant, sent felicitations, so that the Church came into notice as never before in its history, and to its manifest advantage."

It was indeed a spectacular and impressive event as the members of the two Conventions symbolized their oneness by marching two by two and arm in arm through the streets of Baltimore on Wednesday afternoon, May 16, 1877.

Reaching the Starr Church the procession entered in the same order, and the official minutes state that "In accordance with the Plan of Union agreed to by the Conventions of the Methodist Protestant and Methodist Churches, at Baltimore, Md., May 15 and 16, 1877, the representatives of the two Churches assembled in

Joint Convention at Starr Methodist Protestant Church, Baltimore, Md., May 16, 1877, at 4:45 P. M., for the purpose of consummating the Union of the Churches represented."

The Rev. L. W. Bates, D. D., President of the Methodist Protestant Convention, called the Joint Convention to order, and then the Rev. J. J. Smith, D. D., President of the Methodist Convention addressed the assembly, expressing his joy on seeing this day, and saying: "We may have diversities of opinion, and yet, as in the natural world, with diversity there may still be unity—unity of heart and unity of work. This day's work will swell the great wave of unification that rolls on to conquer the world."

Doctor Bates responded and said:

"Twenty-three years have passed since the Churches here represented have been represented in the same body. The universal Church and world will recognize our action as the accomplishment of a great, noble, and glorious purpose. We have done what it is exceedingly difficult for men, or any form of organization, to do. But it was not difficult for us, because in our separation there was less crimination and bitterness of feeling than ever attended a like severance of relations. Still retaining the old respect, and confidence, and love towards each other, we found it easy to blend. It was also easy for us, because we represent the sentiment of the people who compose our Churches. They speak to-day. We are the echo of the united Church we represent. . . . We take the initiative in the glorious work of unification among such Churches of the land. . . . I now pronounce this the General Convention of the Methodist Protestant Church. I call upon you

to arise and sing, 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow.'"

One who was there says: "The scene that ensued beggars description. As the great assembly arose, and the triumphant measures of the old doxology rolled through the sanctuary, every eye was dim with tears, and every form trembled with unutterable emotion. 'The place where they were was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.' Business was suspended, and speeches, brief, earnest, joyful, impressively eloquent, filled up more than an hour."

The next day permanent officers were elected by ballot. A day of thanksgiving was ordered in recognition of the "providential guidance which has resulted in the now happily consummated Union," and the General Convention finally adjourned on the twenty-third day of May, 1877.

Doctor Drinkhouse remarks in his History, "It was the first formal reunion of dissevered ecclesiasticisms since the Civil War, and once more the country recognized a Continental Methodism, knowing no North, no South, no East, no West, sectionally."

The union had been consummated but it was a union between those who always had been essentially the same. They were really the same people with the same doctrines and the same views as to Church polity. The divergence was on the question of slavery but that had disappeared with the destruction of slavery itself. The supposed union with the Wesleyan Connection had been a practical nullity and the Wesleyan Connection continued on its way. It was simply a reunion of Methodist Protestantism, one section of which had called itself the Methodist Church.

XXI

FRATERNAL ADVANCES BETWEEN THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH

THOUGH well intended, perhaps the efforts for union were premature, and after a time the hope of immediate unification ceased, though the desire for ultimate union still was cherished in many hearts.

Union having been frustrated, at least for the time, the thought of the Methodist Episcopal Church turned towards the development of fraternal feeling between it and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for it was plain that there must be fraternity before there could possibly be union. So efforts now were made on the line of fraternity.

The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, meeting in Brooklyn, in 1872, adopted the following on the matter of fraternity, or friendly relations with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South:

"We believe that very generally there has hitherto existed among our people a disposition of good will and Christian fraternity towards the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. This disposition and purpose we still hold and maintain. In whatever degree of success in preaching the Gospel, edifying believers, and saving souls, God has given to that Church, we devoutly rejoice; and we will continue to pray for the prosperity

and success of the labors of our brethren of that Church, and for its increase in all spiritual and temporal good; and in all our labors, in proximity to the local churches and societies of that body, we desire to maintain with them relations of Christian good-will."

No expressions could be more brotherly in form and none could more fully breathe the spirit of Christian fraternity, but, while the Methodist Episcopal Church was so exceedingly fraternal, it did not believe that, to be fairly fraternal, it should abandon its work and its people throughout the southern part of the United States. Therefore, in its report on fraternity it further said:

"Within the parts of the country in which the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has nearly all its membership and institutions, to wit: all the states formerly known as slave states, except Maryland and Delaware, over three hundred thousand of our members reside, with their houses of worship, institutions of learning, and other Church arrangements.

"Our Church is as really settled in that region as in any other part of the land; and every consideration of good faith to our own people, and of regard to the integrity of our Church, and especially of the unmistakable evidences of the favor of God towards our efforts there, forbids the thought of relaxing our labors in that part of our work. We must therefore continue to occupy that part of the country in perpetuity; and we have need to strengthen and reënforce our work in it as God shall give us the means and the opportunities. But in all this we desire to avoid all unfriendly rivalries with our brethren of the Church South. There is abundant room for both us and them, and God may

use both of these Churches for the promotion of His cause in these parts."

This of course was a practical denial that the Church South was entitled to exclusive possession of the South, and an exceedingly plain declaration that the Methodist Episcopal Church had a right to be in the South, and that it could not conscientiously withdraw from that section. Nevertheless it wished to be on fraternal terms with the Church South, and therefore the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1872, followed its declaration of fraternity by adopting the following:

"To place ourselves in the truly fraternal relation towards our Southern brethren which the sentiments of our people demand, and to prepare the way for the opening of formal fraternity with them, be it hereby

"*Resolved*, That this General Conference will appoint a delegation, consisting of two ministers and one layman, to convey our fraternal greetings to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at its next session."

So earnest was this Methodist Episcopal General Conference in this expression that the report was received and adopted with great enthusiasm, by a rising vote, every delegate, excepting two, voting for it, and all the bishops requesting the privilege of standing with the Conference in the vote.

The fraternal delegates appointed by the Board of Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in compliance with the order of the General Conference, were the Reverend Albert S. Hunt, D. D., of New York, the Reverend Charles H. Fowler, D. D., of Chicago, and General Clinton B. Fisk, of St. Louis.

These delegates attended the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which met in the city of Louisville, in the month of May, 1874, and they were received with marked courtesy.

On the eighth day of the month, these fraternal messengers were escorted to the platform and formally introduced to the presiding bishop, Bishop Doggett, who introduced them to the other bishops, and to the Reverend Dr. Lovick Pierce, who had been the delegate of the Church South in 1848. The latter introduction was a delicate touch of graciousness which must have been a good deal of a solace to the soul of Doctor Pierce with his memories of '48. The delegates presented their credentials which recited the action of the General Conference of 1872, their appointment, and their authorization "to bear the 'fraternal greeting' of the said General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South."

The credentials were signed by an episcopal committee of four bishops, namely, by Bishop Edmund S. Janes, who was elected bishop in 1844, though he was not a member of that General Conference, and by Bishops Levi Scott, Matthew Simpson, and Edward R. Ames, who were members of the General Conference of '44.

The credentials were dated "New York, April 20, 1874."

The Chair then introduced the fraternal delegates to the General Conference. Each delegate addressed the Conference, as was said, "with eloquence and much ability, and acceptably alike to the General Conference and to those who sent them upon this errand of Christian love."

In the course of his remarks, one of the fraternal delegates said:

"Leaving organic union as a question of the future, let us make the union of our hearts the question of to-day; and make one holy covenant from this hour, one in sympathy and one in purpose, we will toil on, shoulder to shoulder, waiting patiently for that near to-morrow, when there shall be but one Methodism for mankind."

This was the spirit of the message borne by these representatives from the old Methodist Episcopal Church to the younger Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

The subject was referred to a committee but, before it was ready to report, the fraternal messengers took their leave. This was on the 13th of May, but Southern courtesy would not permit them to depart without some formal expression. So in lieu of the report at that time Judge Jackson, of Georgia, and Governor Trusten Polk, of Missouri, offered the following resolutions:

"*Resolved*, That the message of love and brotherly kindness from the Methodist Episcopal Church has been cordially received, and has been referred to a Committee of Nine, who will, in due time, formally and fraternally reply thereto.

"*Resolved*, That we regret that the distinguished messengers sent by the Church cannot remain to await the presentation and reception of that report, but, understanding that they leave us to-day, we are unwilling that they should return home without carrying with them the knowledge of our appreciation of their courteous and fraternal bearing among us, and our wishes and prayers for their future happiness and prosperity."

A number of speeches in harmony with the resolu-

tions were made, among them one by Dr. Edmund W. Sehon, who in 1844 belonged to the Ohio Conference and from it was a delegate to the General Conference of that year. In that Conference he joined with the Southern members in signing the historic "Protest," and, later, cast in his lot with the Church South. Thirty years had passed since the confusion and excitement of 1844, and he still had an affection for the old Church, as shown in his eloquent speech at this time, in which he said:

"The appearance of this commission from the Methodist Episcopal Church has brought an hour which my soul has long desired to see. I pray the blessing of God upon them as a member of the old fraternity; and, as a member of the new, I rejoice at any omen of peace and good feeling. It is the demand of the age, of the period in which we live, and of our glorious religion, that we extend to them a fraternal hand. I say nothing of differences. Let the future take care of itself. Let us now extend to them our hands in Christian fraternity."

After the insertion of the word Christian before courteous, the resolutions of Judge Jackson and Governor Polk were adopted, and the fraternal delegates bade the Conference farewell.

The report of the Committee of Nine was not presented until the 23d of May. The report was quite lengthy. In opening it recited the action of the Methodist Episcopal General Conference of 1872 and the designation of three representatives, who had appeared and delivered their message. Then the report continues:

"It is with pleasure that we bear testimony to the distinguished ability, and the eloquent and courteous

manner, in which these Christian brethren discharged their trust. Their utterances warmed our hearts. Their touching allusions to the common heritage of Methodist history, to our oneness of doctrines, polity, and usage, and their calling to mind the great work in which we are both engaged for the extension of the kingdom of their Lord and ours, stirred within us precious memories.

"We are called upon, by the terms of the action of their General Conference, to consider measures necessary 'to prepare the way for the opening of formal fraternity.' Every transaction and utterance of our past history pledges us to regard favorably, and to meet promptly, this initial response to our long expressed desire."

This was proceeding in the most harmonious manner, but just here was interjected an allusion to Dr. Lovick Pierce and the episode of 1868, alluding to the Doctor as "our rejected delegate," though the General Conference of 1868 did not reject him personally but extended courtesies to him, inviting him to attend the sessions, to sit within the bar, and to present propositions to diminish or remove the difficulties between the two bodies. Then the report referred to the incidents of 1869, when the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church made advances to their bishops; of 1870, when a deputation visited the General Conference of the Church South; and now, in 1874, when a commission from the Methodist Episcopal General Conference brings "fraternal greetings," and the report says:

"We hail with pleasure, and embrace the opportunity at length afforded us of entering into negotiations to secure tranquillity and fellowship to our alienated com-

munions upon a permanent basis, and alike honorable to all."

This seemed to be a decided gain but the report immediately declares against the union of the two Churches. It says:

"We deem it proper, for the attainment of the object sought, to guard against all misapprehension. Organic union is not involved in fraternity. In our view of the subject, the reasons for the separate existence of these two branches of Methodism are such as to make corporate union undesirable and impracticable. The events and experiences of the last thirty years have confirmed us in the conviction that such a consummation is demanded by neither reason nor charity. We believe that each Church can do its work and fulfill its mission most effectively by maintaining an independent organization. The causes which led to the division in 1844, upon a Plan of Separation mutually agreed upon, have not disappeared. Some of them exist in their original form and force, and others have been modified but not diminished."

This shows that the Church South General Conference of 1874 still stood for the old Southern interpretation of the acts of 1844, and was as determined as ever to maintain its "independent organization." In brief it was opposed to any "organic union" with the Methodist Episcopal Church, and would not respond affirmatively to the appeal of one of the fraternal delegates to "make one holy covenant that from this hour, one in sympathy and one in purpose, we will toil on, shoulder to shoulder, waiting patiently for that near to-morrow, when there shall be but one Methodism for mankind."

For their opposition to union they gave several reasons. For example "the size of the connection, and the extent of territory covered by it"; the General Conference "was becoming too unwieldy for the ends originally designed;" for the General Conference the Methodist Episcopal Church "claimed for it prerogatives which seemed to us both dangerous and unconstitutional. In their view the General Conference is supreme. Although restricted in the exercise of its power by a constitution, it is the judge of the restrictions, and is thus practically unlimited. In our view, the General Conference is a body of limited powers. It cannot absorb the functions of other and coördinate branches of the Church government, and there are methods by which all constitutional questions may be brought to a satisfactory issue." With these differences of view, "Were the two Methodisms organically united, it would lead to serious collision, and expose the minority to harassing legislation, if not to oppression."

Then came a reference to slavery and the report said: "The existence of slavery in the Southern States furnished an occasion, with its connected questions, fruitful of disturbance; and to this the division has been mainly attributed. The position of Southern Methodism on that subject was Scriptural. Our opinions have undergone no change." Thus after the lapse of all these years since emancipation they assert that their old views as to slavery were unchanged and still affirm that these views were Scriptural. And this in 1874, nearly ten years after the war!

The report also referred to difference of method in dealing with the colored people, saying: "We have set off our colored members into an independent eccle-

siastical body with our own creed and polity. . . . This method has met with encouraging success. We believe it is the best for both races. . . . Our Northern brethren have pursued a different plan. . . . They have mixed conferences, mixed congregations, and mixed schools. We do not ask them to adopt our plan. We could not adopt theirs." Of course long years ago that mixed condition was regarded as a necessity growing out of pioneer work and unsettled conditions, and it is plain that they have been greatly modified. Only a few years before the Church South had its own mixed congregations. Then the report goes on to say:

"But, while we are clear and final in our declarations against the union of the two Methodisms, we welcome measures looking to the removal of obstacles in the way of amity and peace."

Following this is a disquisition on the so-called "Plan of Separation," after which came the following:

"*Resolved*, That this General Conference has received with pleasure the fraternal greetings of the Methodist Episcopal Church, conveyed to us by their delegates, and that our College of Bishops be, and are hereby, authorized to appoint a delegation, consisting of two ministers and one layman, to bear our Christian salutations to their next ensuing General Conference."

Thus was the interchange of salutations through fraternal delegates from the two Churches inaugurated and established, for it has continued until the present time and, doubtless, will continue in the future.

Then the report closed with the following:

"*Resolved*, That, in order to remove all obstacles to formal fraternity between the two Churches, our College of Bishops is authorized to appoint a commission,

consisting of three ministers and two laymen, to meet a similar commission authorized by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and to adjust all existing difficulties."

This report was finally adopted by a vote of 109 to 61, but there had been a long and animated discussion, occupying the morning and the afternoon session, and the report was recommitted and after it had been slightly modified and rearranged, it was adopted by the above mentioned vote.

The large adverse vote calls for some explanation. The fact is that a number of the members wished the report simply to respond to the fraternal greetings and to express fraternal feelings without reference to former differences and unpleasantnesses.

This event of 1874 elicited from the Church South General Conference very general and very emphatic opposition to union between the Church South and the Methodist Episcopal Church, but it should not be deemed a failure for it brought out a feeling of fraternity from both Churches, and a willingness to attempt a settlement of certain difficulties and, particularly, those that related to property in dispute.

Since about the close of the Civil War the Methodist Episcopal Church, as the evidence shows, had made repeated advances of a fraternal character, involving not only an expressed desire for fraternal relations, but also an avowed effort towards union with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

It was supposed that the cause, or occasion of nearly all the differences, namely, human slavery, having disappeared, that there could be no insuperable obstacle in the way of an ecclesiastical unity.

It was found, however, that the Church South did not desire a union and was positively opposed to a fusion with the old Church. It was plain, therefore, that there was no immediate hope for organic unity. Nevertheless, though proffers of union were unsuccessful, formal fraternity was a possibility.

The act of the 1872 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, directing that fraternal delegates should convey its formal and most sincere greetings to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which was to meet in 1874, opened the way for the Church South to reciprocate in response by expressions of fraternal feeling, which it did, so that, by these public declarations, the relations of the two Churches were placed on a mutual and well defined basis of fraternity.

Then when the General Conference of the Church South responded by sending its fraternal delegates to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and this mutual interchange of delegations and greetings was continued quadrennium after quadrennium, there was established a recognized, as well as an actual, kinship between the two bodies.

Negotiations for union were held in abeyance for the time being but efforts continued in the promotion of brotherliness. The fraternal delegation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1876, consisted of Dr. Lovick Pierce, Dr. James A. Duncan, and Dr. L. C. Garland.

It was a fitting compliment to Doctor Pierce, who had been a prominent member of the General Conference of 1844, one of the organizers of the Methodist

Episcopal Church, South, and the representative of that Church to the Methodist Episcopal General Conference of 1868, that he should be designated by his Church to be its fraternal delegate in 1876 and the leader of the delegation. This time he could be sure of the completest sort of a reception his heart could desire. Now there would be no question as to his most cordial recognition as a delegate or as to the propriety of fraternity between the two Churches.

Unfortunately there was in store a disappointment for him, for his Church, and for the Methodist Episcopal Church. Sad to say he was not able to reach the Conference. He was in the seventy-second year of his ministry and the ninety-second of his age but, venerable though he was, he started for the Conference, but ill-health prevented his reaching the Conference seat. However he sent to the body a letter which was pertinent, pathetic, and full of his characteristic frankness.

On Friday morning, the twelfth day of May, 1876, and at eleven o'clock, the order of the day in the General Conference was the reception of the fraternal delegates from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Bishop Peck was presiding, but he suggested that Bishop Janes take the chair. This was appropriate not only because Bishop Janes was the senior bishop but also because he had been elected in 1844 before the Southern delegates withdrew to form the Church South. After taking the chair, Bishop Janes presented to the Conference the Reverend James A. Duncan, D. D., president of the Randolph Macon College, and Landon C. Garland, LL. D., Chancellor of the Vanderbilt University, as the fraternal delegates from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Then the secretary of the Conference read the credentials, the action of the General Conference of the Church South being signed by Thomas O. Summers, the secretary of that General Conference, and the designation of the delegates being signed by H. N. M'Tyeire, secretary of the College of Bishops.

Following this the secretary read the letter from Dr. Lovick Pierce, the "Senior Fraternal Messenger." In this letter, or address, Doctor Pierce said: "I furnish an instance . . . such as I think it likely was never known before in one sent abroad on any diplomatic ministry; a man in the *ninety-second* year of his age, and in the *seventy-second* of his *effective ministry*."

In an allusion to the incident of 1848, he said: "I had been sent as a lone fraternal messenger from our first General Conference, after the division, in 1846, to arrange for and settle on a basis of intercommunication, so that *two* General Conferences instead of *one* should be all the difference between us. . . . It was followed by a wintry night of twenty-one years before any morning star, foretelling the approach of a better day, ever arose above the gloomy horizon that encompassed our beloved Methodism. This star of hope appeared in the voluntary visit of Bishop Simpson and Doctor (now Bishop) Harris to the meeting of our bishops in St. Louis, May, 1869."

Here he recounted the successive fraternal approaches of the Methodist Episcopal Church down to the fraternal delegation of 1874, and continued by saying: "We protest against any longer use of the popular phrase 'two Methodisms,' as between us. There is but *one* Episcopal Methodism in the United States of America,

and you and we together make up this one Methodism. . . . For both divisions to call themselves the Methodist Episcopal Church would have been ridiculous. And since to you belonged the right to keep the old title without any affix, if you so determined, we made ourselves the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The affix is derived solely from our Southern locality. . . . In ninety-two years of our Church existence we have increased from a mere beginning to a large fraction over two millions of Episcopal Methodists. Then add to these all other types of Methodists, though still Methodists, and we closely approximate *three millions*. And then, again, when we count in, according to the laws of mortality, all that have died, the Methodists, in these ninety-two years, we may well say, Behold and see what God has done by us as well as for us! Our record is in heaven great as well as in the earth."

In closing he said: "Let us, as two companies of brothers intrusted with a most precious patrimonial estate . . . see which of us can so use our portion of this Methodist capital as to make its percentage of income the test of comparative fidelity, industry, and devotion to its polity and its principles of operation, as its founders and its fathers turned it over to us. Let us do this as brethren of one heart and one mind, of one great aim and end, and the future will prove that our division into two General Conference jurisdictions was a benediction instead of a deprivation."

This was a remarkable communication from this venerable minister whose life covered the entire history of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and whose active life for nearly three-quarters of a century had been a considerable part of that history in its making. In it was

a brotherly spirit but nowhere is there a wish for, or a suggestion towards the union of the two bodies, but, on the contrary, there is a persistent suggestion for the continuance of the two separate Churches, and the declaration that the division was a benediction.

The reading of Doctor Pierce's letter was followed by the fraternal address of the Reverend James A. Duncan, D. D. The address was most gracious and eloquent. Referring to its quality, Dr. James M. Buckley has said: "Never in the history of American Methodism was an impression more delightful and profound made by a single paragraph than by his exordium, which was delivered in a manner worthy of the traditions of Cicero."

Doctor Duncan thus began:

"Mr. President and Brethren: As I stand in your presence to-day, a solemn joy in my heart takes precedence of all other emotions. The responsibility of my mission and of this hour is solemn, but its hope is an inspiration of joy. Around me I behold the venerable and distinguished representatives of a great Church; beyond them are millions of Methodists in America and Europe, who feel deeply concerned in the issues of this hour; beyond them, in still more distant circles, stand a great cloud of witnesses, composed of all who care for the peace, the unity, and the prosperity of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus; and, sir, above us is the 'general assembly and Church of the first born, who are written in heaven,' and among them, high seated in their own radiant places, are our sainted fathers; and over all, upon that eternal throne before which we all reverently worship, reigns 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.' In such solemn presence, where

all dissensions seem profanities, where all temporal and sectional distinctions disappear, and there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female, but all are one in Christ Jesus, through whom all have access by one Spirit unto the Father, and 'are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God' as a humble citizen of that kingdom and member of that household, in the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and by her authority as a fraternal messenger, with brotherly kindness in my heart, and words of peace upon my lips, I salute you this day as brethren of Christ Jesus, our Lord."

Referring to fraternity he said: "Mr. President, you will agree with me that a sound, healthful fraternity between Christian Churches ought to rest on no uncertain ground, but should give an intelligent and explicit account of itself. It has been well said, 'The amity that wisdom knits not, folly may easily untie.' . . . But what is fraternity? Is it only a quadrennial ceremony, a sort of ecclesiastical court formality, a specious parade of public addresses? Is it a mere form? Sir, I humbly conceive that Christian fraternity is something more than such a solemn mockery—something deeper, more vital, and more sacred. It is a great Christian movement, giving concurrent expression to the great brotherly kindness of more than a million hearts. It is a sublime Christian alliance, in which charity becomes supreme over all disputations, and reaffirms its meaning, its power, and its consequences. . . . How to blend all sects into one denomination, and obliterate all formal distinction in Church government, will, perhaps, continue to be an

unsolved problem until the millennium. . . . The practical value of fraternal relations will entirely depend upon the character of its principles and the respect which they command. . . . We do not establish fraternity between these two Churches for any secular or worldly end. . . . We do not establish fraternity merely as a judicious measure for ending unhappy controversies. But we hope it will end them. . . . We do not establish fraternity merely as a policy measure. . . . We do not establish fraternity as a measure of sectarian ambition as Methodists. . . . Christian fraternity is the reciprocal recognition of Christ in each other. . . . If fraternity is anything, it is at least an end of strife—it is peace; it is a delightful silence after a long battle; it is the calm after the noise of the waters and the tumult of the elements when the Master has said, 'Peace, be still.'"

Dr. L. C. Garland delivered the third address. It was shorter than the others but exceedingly forceful and straightforward. Being a layman he voiced the sentiments of the laity of his Church. He said, in part:

"The regret that an occasion should ever have arisen for the division of the Methodist Church was at that time, and still is, profound and universal. This regret, however, did not extend beyond the occasion, because the occasion, as it presented itself to our apprehension, was of such a nature as to render division not only necessary, but desirable. . . . That difficulties in the way of cordial fraternity have existed, and still do exist, cannot be denied. . . . We of the South are anxious that they should be removed. . . . What would our illustrious founder, whose last letter to Mr. Asbury contained a charge to maintain the unity of

Methodism throughout the world, think of us, were he alive, if we do not compose our strifes, and dwell together in the bonds of Christian sympathy and love?

"And as patriots, how vast is the responsibility resting upon us to restore, as far as power lies in us, a kind political feeling between the two sections of the country, so lately arrayed against each other in the struggles of an internecine war! . . . And what influence can we exert in that direction if we fail to restore friendly relations between ourselves? If the two Churches could bring about the *entente cordiale*, it would accomplish more towards the restoration of good feeling between the sections, North and South, than a score of Centennial Expositions.

"Politics appear to me to be a centrifugal force, tending continually to engender sectional strife, and to the rending asunder the bonds of civil society; and where shall we find a force to antagonize it, a centripetal force to draw together and cement in one the disunited parts, if not in the grand unity of a common Christian faith? We do, therefore, sincerely desire the restoration of good feeling between the two Churches upon a basis derogatory to the honor of neither."

These were noble sentiments and nobly expressed but there was no proffer of organic unity and no suggestion of the union of the two Churches. However, they made for fraternity and that was a great gain and the fraternal sentiments were most cordially reciprocated by this General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

After the conclusion of the address of Doctor Garland, Dr. D. A. Whedon offered the following resolution which was adopted by a rising vote:

"*Resolved*, That we gladly welcome among us the distinguished representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the Reverend James A. Duncan, D. D., and Landon C. Garland, LL. D., greatly regretting at the same time the inability to be present with us of their associate, the venerable Reverend Dr. Lovick Pierce, whom, for his eminent character and services, it would have especially delighted us to receive, and whose letter has given such satisfaction to the Conference; and we heartily recognize their coming as a harbinger of better relations henceforth between the two chief branches of our American Methodism. We have listened with great pleasure to their words of love and brotherhood in response to the fraternal greetings borne to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, by direction of our General Conference at its last session, and, fully reciprocating the kindly sentiments they have expressed, will give their communication early and most considerate attention."

At last fraternity was a declared fact and a working force. Fraternal feeling was manifest but the Church South had not, through its General Conference or by its fraternal delegates, or in any other way expressed the faintest wish for a union of the two Churches, but, on the contrary, had formally and strongly pronounced against organic unity.

Still, if fraternity was secured, that was a great gain, for then the Methodist Episcopal Church could work in the South without exciting bitter feelings and the two Churches might labor side by side in fraternal harmony.

XXII

THE CAPE MAY COMMISSION

THE General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, held in 1874, not only resolved to send "a delegation consisting of two ministers and one layman, to bear our Christian salutations to their [the Methodist Episcopal] next ensuing General Conference," but on the same day [the 23d of May], and in the same report, the Church South General Conference adopted the following:

"*Resolved*, That in order to remove all obstacles to formal fraternity between the two Churches, our College of Bishops is authorized to appoint a commission, consisting of three ministers and two laymen, to meet a similar commission authorized by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and to adjust all existing difficulties."

Three days after this action was taken, namely, on the 26th of May, the last day of the session, the same General Conference of the Church South, for some reason, as though explanation were needed, took additional action and passed the following:

"*Whereas*, the discussions and votes of this Conference on the subject of fraternal relations with the Methodist Episcopal Church, and its cognate subjects, present the appearance of essential differences which do not exist; therefore,

"1. *Resolved*, That upon the subject of fraternal re-

lations with the Methodist Episcopal Church, upon a proper basis, this Conference is a unit.

"2. *Resolved*, That we are also a unit upon the propriety of appointing a commission empowered to meet a like commission from the Methodist Episcopal Church, to settle all questions of difficulty between us, and that such settlement is essential to complete fraternity.

"3. *Resolved*, That the only points of difference between us on this whole subject are the best methods of accomplishing this desired end."

There had been a spirited debate on the report presented on the 23d of May and quite a respectable minority objected to the detailed specification of historic negotiations and differences, beginning with the case of Dr. Lovick Pierce in 1846 and 1848.

The minority wanted these details omitted and offered a report in which they included the first seven paragraphs of the report of the committee, then omitted the detailed differences and substituted the following:

"But measures preparatory to formal fraternity would be defective that leave out of view questions in dispute between the Methodist Episcopal Church and ourselves. These questions relate to the course pursued by some of their accredited agents whilst prosecuting their work in the South, and to property which has been taken and held by them to this day, against our protest and remonstrance.

"Although feeling ourselves sorely aggrieved in these things, we stand ready to meet our brothers of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the spirit of Christian candor, and to compose all differences upon the principles of justice and equity.

"It is to be regretted that the honored representatives who bore fraternal greetings to us were not empowered also to enter upon a settlement of these vexed questions. We are prepared to take advanced steps in this direction, and waiving any considerations which might justify a greater reserve, we will not only appoint a delegation to return the greeting so gracefully conveyed to us from the Methodist Episcopal Church, but we will also provide for a commission to meet a similar commission from that Church for the purpose of settling disturbing questions.

"Open and righteous treatment of all cases of complaint will furnish the only solid ground upon which we can meet. Relations of amity are with special emphasis demanded between bodies so near akin. We be brethren. To the realization of this the families of Methodism are called by the movements of the times. The attractive power of the Cross is working mightily. The Christian elements in the world are all astir in their search for each other. Christian hearts are crying to each other across vast spaces, and longing for fellowship. The heart of Southern Methodism being in full accord with these sentiments, your committee submit the following resolutions for adoption."

The resolutions were the same as the last two resolutions of the majority report. The vote was sixty-five for and one hundred and three against, and this minority report was rejected.

Remarks in the discussions and the different proposals for action, and probably some other things, seem to have suggested the propriety of passing the three additional resolutions of the last day's session.

The very things alleged against the action of repre-

sentatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church as "to property which has been taken and held by them to this day, against our protest and remonstrance," was alleged by the Methodist Episcopal Church against representatives of the Church South, from its beginning down to the two General Conferences of 1874 and 1876.

It was plain, therefore, that there could be no real, and settled, fraternity between the two bodies until the right and title to the properties in question had been adjusted.

In order to reach this settlement and for "the opening of formal fraternity" with the Church South, the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1872, sent three delegates to the 1874 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and that Conference reciprocated the action by sending fraternal delegates in response, and by designating a commission to compose these differences.

The Methodist Episcopal General Conference of 1876 met this by adopting the following:

"Your committee, to whom was referred a resolution adopted by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and borne to us with the Christian salutations of our sister Church, providing for the appointment of a commission on the part of that body, to meet a similar commission authorized by the Methodist Episcopal Church, beg leave to report that they recommend the adoption of the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That, in order to remove all obstacles to formal fraternity between the two Churches, our Board of Bishops are directed to appoint a commission, con-

sisting of three ministers and two laymen, to meet a similar commission authorized by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to adjust all existing difficulties."

In compliance with this authorization, Bishop Harris, representing the Board of Bishops, announced the following commissioners to meet a similar committee from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, namely: Morris D. C. Crawford, Enoch L. Fancher, Erasmus Q. Fuller, Clinton B. Fisk, John P. Newman." The two laymen were Judge Fancher and General Fisk. This was on the 20th of May.

On the 29th of May, Bishop Janes presented to the General Conference the certificate of the commissioners of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which was referred to the chairman of the commission appointed by the General Conference.

The commissioners appointed by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, were Edward H. Myers, Robert K. Hargrove, Thomas M. Finney, David Clopton, and Robert B. Vance.

This joint commission held its sessions in Cape May, New Jersey, convening on the 16th of August, 1876, and continuing in session seven days, and, because of the place of meeting, it has been commonly called the Cape May Commission.

It was a favorable moment for such a meeting, for the re-unified nation was celebrating the first centennial of its birth—the independence of the United States of America as a nation.

Because of the circumstances and the common national thought of the people in general, there was a prevailing disposition to forget the Civil War and the

divisive question, connected therewith. With the danger of division passed, people in all parts gave themselves up to a season of rejoicing over a perpetuated national union and the remembrance of the common history of the earlier times which was the heritage of all, and these sentiments were calculated to strengthen fraternal feelings between the two kindred Churches.

However, the question before the joint commission was not as to the unification of the two denominations represented in the commissions.

The Church South, in its General Conference of 1874, had refused to concur in the suggestion of organic unity, as it had previously on sundry occasions, but it did adopt, as has been noted, a report providing for a commission to meet a like commission from the Methodist Episcopal Church to settle difficulties between the two Churches. This action referred most favorably to "fraternal relations," and favored this settlement of difficulties as "essential to complete fraternity."

It was now pronounced in favor of "fraternal relations," and the commission was created "in order to remove all obstacles to formal fraternity between the two Churches."

The purpose of the joint commission was, therefore, not to form a union between the two bodies but to consider and adjust unsettled questions, especially as to property, and to devise a *modus vivendi* which might enable the two Churches to operate in the South with some degree of harmony.

Certain disputed rights as to property here and there in the South had caused a considerable degree of agitation and not a little unpleasant feeling between parties representating the one side or the other, especially

where both Churches were working in the same locality.

Some of these property disputes were results of the Civil War in places where the military authorities in control had authorized or permitted the representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church to use certain properties where the churches had been erected previously by the Church South. Difficulties of this character also long antedated the war and ran back to the times following the formation of the Church South in 1845. Then, and after the Civil War, the Methodist Episcopal Church declared that its property in places had been carried over to the Church South, while in some instances the Southern Church asserted similar aggressions.

Now was the time to attempt the settlement of all such differences and the joint commission was to hear and to settle principles that would tend to harmony.

As a summary of what was done and as a revelation as to how it was done, the joint commission issued an address, or report, "To the Bishops, the Ministers, and the Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South."

In the opening they say: "We, the commissioners appointed by authority of the General Conferences, respectively, of the above-named Churches, to remove all obstacles to a formal fraternity, and to adjust all existing difficulties between them, deem it proper, in advance of our report to the General Conferences of our respective Churches, to communicate to you, in general terms, the result of the recent harmonious session of our joint commission."

As to the method by which the commission proceeded the paper states that "After a written com-

munication from the commissioners of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was received and answered by the commissioners of the Methodist Episcopal Church, both Boards met in joint session, the labors of which were continued during seven days. . . .

"If any in the Churches entertained the fear, previous to our meeting, that we could not obtain complete harmony of sentiment touching the momentous questions to be determined, they will be rejoiced to learn that after having given due attention to all questions involved in the proper construction of a platform of complete fraternity between the two great branches of Episcopal Methodism in the United States, we have arrived at a settlement of every matter affecting, as we suppose, the principles of a lasting and cordial adjustment."

Referring to disputes as to property, the address states: "There were two principal questions to be considered with regard to Church property in dispute between local societies of the two Churches; first, as to the legal ownership of said property; and second, as to whether it will consist with strict equity or promote Christian harmony or the cause of religion to dispossess those societies now using Church property which was originally intended for their use and occupancy, and of which they have acquired possession, though they may have lost legal title to it by their transfer from one Church to the other. We have considered the papers in all cases that have been brought to our notice. These arose in the following states: Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Tennessee, Louisiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina."

It will be noticed that all these cases were in the

South, and that no difficulties of this kind were raised in the North.

Referring to the principles of settlement, the report continues:

"In respect to some of these cases, we have given particular directions, but for all other cases the joint commission unanimously adopted the following rules for the adjustment of adverse claims to Church property:

"Rule 1. In cases not adjusted by the joint commission, any Society of either Church, constituted according to its Discipline, now occupying the Church property, shall remain in possession thereof; provided that if there is now in the same place a society of more members attached to the other Church, and which has hitherto claimed the use of the property, the latter shall be entitled to possession.

"Rule 2. Forasmuch as we have no power to annul decisions respecting Church property made by the State Courts, the joint commission ordain in respect thereof:

"(1) In cases in which such a decision has been made, or in which there exists an agreement, the same shall be carried out in good faith.

"(2) In communities where there are two societies, one belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the other to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which have adversely claimed the Church property, it is recommended that without delay they amicably compose their differences, irrespective of the strict legal title, and settle the same according to Christian principles, the equities of the particular case, and, so far as practicable, according to the principle of the aforegoing rule; but if such settlement cannot be

speedily made, then the question shall be referred for equitable decision to three arbitrators, one to be chosen by each claimant from their respective societies, and the two thus chosen shall select a third person not connected with either of said Churches, and the decision of any two of them shall be final; and,

"(3) That in communities in which there is but one society, Rule 1 shall be faithfully observed in the interest of peace and fraternity.

"Rule 3. Whenever necessary to carry the foregoing rules into effect, the legal title to Church property shall be accordingly transferred.

"Rule 4. These rules shall take effect immediately."

Then the joint commission followed with this recommendation:

"In order to further promote the peaceful results contemplated by this joint commission, and to remove as far as may be all occasion for hostility between the two Churches, we recommend to the members of both, as a wise rule of settlement where property is in contest, and one or both are weak, that they compose their differences by uniting in the same communion, and in all cases that the ministers and members recognize each other in all the relations of fraternity, as possessed of ecclesiastical rights and privileges of equal dignity and validity. They should each receive from the other ministers and members in good standing with the same alacrity and credit as if coming from their own Church, and, without interference with each other's institutions or missions, they should, nevertheless, coöperate in all Christian enterprises. It is not to be supposed in respect to some mere matters of opinion that all ministers and members in either Church will be in accord, but

we trust and believe that a spirit of fellowship and mutual regard will pervade the reconciled ranks of the entire ministry and membership of both Churches.

"We believe, also, that their supreme allegiance to the cause of the Great Master will triumph over all variation of personal sentiment, and will soon exalt the claims of brotherly affection, that from this auspicious hour a new epoch in Methodism will begin its brighter history, so that we shall know no unfraternal Methodism in the United States, or even in the wide world."

It may be remarked that in all this deliverance of the joint commission of the two Churches there is nothing that disputes, or raises any question as to the right of the Methodist Episcopal Church to be in the South, and it has been interpreted as conceding that there was no line of separation limiting the Methodist Episcopal Church to the North, and that there was nothing to prevent the Methodist Episcopal Church from being anywhere in the South and there to work side by side with the Church South.

The chief question was as to the adjustment of disputed claims as to property in the South, where under the recommendations and rules laid down by the joint commission, both Churches could retain property and carry on their work. This left the Methodist Episcopal Church in the South by conceded right and by the concurrence of the commission of the Church South, so that never again could the point be legally or fairly raised that the Methodist Episcopal Church had no right to be in the South.

From this time the two Churches were to work the one beside the other, as the report phrased and illustrated it:

"Two by two the apostles began the promulgation of Christianity in the world. They were companion evangelists, distinct in their individuality; but they were, at the same time, one in spirit, purpose and fellowship. Their itinerant successors in the chief Churches of American Methodism, in restored fraternity, will vie with each other to wave the banner of the cross in this Western world, and henceforth will proclaim that these Churches are one in spirit, one in purpose, one in fellowship."

So the two Churches like two apostles were to go together in the prosecution of their work.

The finality and completeness of the adjustment is asserted by the joint commission in very strong terms. The commission considered that it had constructed "a platform of complete fraternity," and that it had "arrived at a settlement of every matter affecting, . . . the principles of a lasting and cordial adjustment."

According to these declarations all the differences between the two Churches were now arranged to the satisfaction of both parties. Everything was settled. All disputes were harmonized, and they had arrived "at the desired consummation of a unanimous agreement of complete fraternity." The adjustment was, and was to be, not only "lasting" but also "cordial." They had succeeded "in uniting between them the broken cords of affectionate and brotherly fraternization," and from that moment there would be "no unfraternal Methodism."

Hence the report said: "These fraternized Churches have no further occasion for sectional disputes or acrimonious differences; they may henceforth remember their common origin, pursue their fruit bearing work,

and rejoice in their own and each other's success, while engaged in the same great mission of converting the world to Christ."

According to this the arrangement was not only final but also complete. Everything had been adjusted. No further unpleasantness could be possible. Never again would there be, or could there be, any occasion for difficulty or unfraternal difference, but, anywhere and everywhere in the South, the two Churches could, and would, without friction, work side by side. Paradise was restored.

The commission made a declaration as to the status of the Church South, in which it said: "Since the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was consummated in 1845, by the voluntary exercise of the right of the Southern Annual Conferences and ministers and members to adhere to that communion, it has been an Evangelical Church reared on Scriptural foundations, and her ministers and members, with those of the Methodist Episcopal Church, have constituted one Methodist family, though in distinct ecclesiastical connections."

Evidently there was no disposition at any time to deny that the Church South was a legitimate Church and an Evangelical Church, and, at any time, the Methodist Episcopal Church would have admitted that the Church South was a Methodist Episcopal Church, and from the old stock. No one ever disputed that. Further, the Methodist Episcopal Church would always concede that the Church South with itself constituted the same Methodist family. Neither was there any dispute as to the right of the ministers and members in the South to become a Church, or as to the fact that

the said ministers and members did, in 1845, of their own free will and accord organize the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. There was no dispute as to that but rather the emphasis was put on the fact that they themselves did it voluntarily. They did it and nobody else.

The Methodist Episcopal commissioners freely conceded these things. Indeed these commissioners were conciliatory in the extreme, and so much so, that possibly without fully perceiving its bearing, on one point they conceded too much. So anxious were they to reach harmony and fraternity that they apparently were blinded to an historical inaccuracy which was issued in the declaration of the joint commission.

The report of this commission says:

"As to the status of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and their coördinate relation as legitimate branches of Episcopal Methodism, each of said Churches is a legitimate branch of Episcopal Methodism in the United States, having a common origin in the Methodist Episcopal Church organized in 1784."

To say the least, this must have been an inadvertence on the part of the Methodist Episcopal commissioners, for that is contrary to historic facts. As a matter of fact the Methodist Episcopal Church did not branch from anything in 1844 or 1845, though ministers and members in the South by "the voluntary exercise" of their power did dissolve their connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church and organize the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Certainly the Methodist Episcopal Church did not branch from the Church South.

The Methodist Episcopal Church is not a "branch" having its "origin in the Methodist Episcopal Church organized in 1784." It was organized in 1784 and is that very Methodist Episcopal Church "organized in 1784," which, without a break in its continuity, has come down past 1844 and 1845 and down to the present moment.

It is not a branch but the main stream. It is not a branch but the original tree with its roots reaching back to 1784.

The branch is the Church South, and it branched off the main trunk, the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1845, but the old tree continued to grow on.

This idea of both Churches being branches of the original Church founded in 1784 is an evident error. Both are not branches from the same original stock. In an accommodated sense it may be said that both are parts of Episcopal Methodism but not that both are branches of the same original trunk. The Methodist Episcopal Church of 1784 is the Methodist Episcopal Church of the present time. One of the Churches branched from the Methodist Episcopal Church, and that one was the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. That is the branch. The other is the original trunk.

It is to be observed that in the entire action of the joint commission there is no declaration in favor of the union of the two denominations. Union is not suggested or even considered in the report.

This seems somewhat singular when it is remembered that the Methodist Episcopal Church or its representatives had so frequently suggested organic unity, but then it is also to be recalled that the Church South or its representatives had steadily declined to consider

organic union. So this may be another concession on the part of the Methodist Episcopal commissioners for unanimity in what the joint commission did report.

Certain allusions in the report are against any idea of organic unity. Thus the phrase "though in distinct ecclesiastical connections," and the suggestion that the two Churches should move "two by two (like) the apostles." So in the paragraph of the report which says:

"Astronomers tell us of dual-stars, revolving together in mutual relation and harmony, whose differing colors are so much the complement of each other as to produce a pure white light of exceeding brilliancy. The dual Churches of American Methodism will henceforth revolve in mutual fellowship and harmony, so much the complement of one another, as together to produce the pure and blended light of Christian charity and fraternal love."

The dual Churches, like the "dual-stars," "revolving together in mutual relation and harmony" would shine in and on the same field, blending their light and illuminating the same people, and, "Henceforth" the two bodies "may hail each other as from the auxiliary ranks of one great army. The only differences they will foster will be those friendly rivalries that spring from earnest endeavors to further to the utmost the triumphs of the Gospel of peace. Whatever progress is made by the one Church, or by the other, will occasion general joy. They will rejoice in each other's success as a common good; and, amid the thousand glorious memories of Methodism, they will go forward devoted to their one work of spreading Scriptural holiness over these lands."

But as there were dual-stars, the two bodies were not to be united into one and be one organic unity, but to be two Churches still.

However, according to the report a new era had begun. They were to "compose their differences," and there was to be "no unfraternal Methodism," for, though distinct and independent, "these Churches are one in spirit, one in purpose, one in fellowship," and, though separate, yet, like double stars side by side, they would blend their rays, illuminate the same field, and shine upon the same people. A "new epoch" had dawned.

With this outcome, and there was nothing impossible about it, the commission, notwithstanding an error or two, would have accomplished very much. Whether its prophecies were reliable the future would determine.

XXIII

FRATERNITY IN PAN-METHODISTIC CONFERENCES

MANY official and unofficial expressions in favor of union with the Church South were uttered from time to time through the years by representative men of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

In the first Ecumenical Methodist Conference held in City Road Chapel, London, England, in the month of September, 1881, there were more or less positive suggestions pointing towards some form of unity.

In the sermon of Bishop Matthew Simpson, preached at the opening of that Ecumenical Conference, he said:

"There are those, however, who disparage Methodism because it has had divisions, and they predict its early disintegration. For the same reason Christianity itself might be disparaged. The learned and eloquent Bossuet wrote a work against Protestantism on account of its variations—showing its weakness; but, nevertheless, in the last century, its progress has been more rapid than ever before. I am not sure that these divisions are an unmixed evil. They seem to me to have compensations also. With the different tastes and habits of men, I fancy that, through Churches somewhat differently organized, and with different usages, more minds may be won for Christ. Certainly we may be provoked even to love and good works. It seems also to me that as God has showed us physical life in

almost every possible form, He means that we shall understand that Christian life may exist and flourish in different organizations and usages. He would show us that there is no sacredness in mere ecclesiasticism. Organization has its value, and every member of each Church should be true to his association; yet the organization is only the temple in which the life dwells. The organization is of man. The life is of Christ. Were there but one organization with certain usages that prospered, we should think its forms and usages were in themselves sacred, we should grow narrow and bigoted. Our Church would be *the* Church, and all others would be schismatics. But when we see life in other Churches, we learn that the God of the Jew is the God of the Gentile also. We recognize a brother beloved in every member of the family, and praise God for the infinitude of His grace. Quite possibly, also, in these separate organizations a little more flexibility may be gained, and, while holding fast to the Great Head of the Church, and contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, we may learn from each other something that may help us in conquering the world for Christ."

Then referring specifically to Methodism, the Bishop continued: "As to the divisions in the Methodist family, there is little to mar the family likeness. For, first, there has been among the Wesleyan ranks no division as to doctrines. The clear statements in Mr. Wesley's sermons, and the doctrinal character of the hymns constantly sung, have aided in keeping us one. All over the world Methodist theology is a unit. Nor, secondly, is there any radical difference in usages. The class-meeting, the prayer-meeting, the love-feast, the watch-

night, though more or less strictly observed, are known everywhere in Methodism. So far as the membership is concerned, there is scarcely a single difference. Even in the Connexional bonds there is general likeness. The itinerant ministry, and the quarterly and annual conferences, exist in almost every branch. In the manner of legislation, and in the mode of affecting ministerial changes, there are some differences; but the points of agreement are so numerous as compared with the differences that we are emphatically one. We have no divisions as to vestments, and candles, and genuflections. We have no High Church, or Low Church, or Broad Church. Differ as we may, there is something in all of us which the world recognizes."

Picturing a beautiful grove he said: "Our Churches resemble these trees. The trunks near the earth stand stiffly and widely apart. The more nearly towards heaven they ascend, the closer and closer they come together, until they form one beautiful canopy, under which the sons of men enjoy both shelter and happiness. Then I thought of that beautiful prayer of the Saviour, 'That they all may be one, that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and that Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me.' In loving obedience to Christ's commands, and in earnest efforts for the extension of His kingdom by doing good to men, is true oneness with Him to be found. Those who have the spirit of Christ, who go about always doing good, will be like-minded."

Bishop Simpson had years before this indicated his desire for the organic union of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

In this Ecumenical Conference the idea of Christian oneness was emphasized rather than organic unity.

The Reverend Augustus C. George, D. D., of the Methodist Episcopal Church read an essay in which he said: "Whatever promotes Christian unity ought to be cultivated, and whatever is calculated to hinder it ought to be avoided. No false standards must be set up. Uniformity must not be demanded; nor must it be concluded that any one is not in Christ because he is not with us. The visible unity exists because of the invisible unity, and the invisible unity has its origin and inspiration in Christian experience.

"So we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. . . . The increase and manifestation of Christian unity 'among ourselves' refers, it may be presumed, to the maintenance of proper fraternal relations between the different branches of the world-wide Methodism. There are many Methodist organizations—I think we will agree that there are too many—but there is only one Methodism. The family likeness is everywhere observable. . . . We must secure a confederation of Methodist Churches in all lands. 'The substantial unity of Methodism the world over,' says the London *Methodist Recorder* in a recent issue, 'is a providential fact of the profoundest significance, pregnant, probably, with the grandest results in the developments of the future; and the day that should witness the recognized oneness of all the Methodist Churches, not in organic union, but in fraternal alliance and confederation, would be one of the brightest that has ever dawned upon the earth.' There can be no doubt of it; for when the world-wide Methodism becomes not only a consulting but also a

confederated Methodism, a long step will be taken towards an effective answer to our Saviour's high-priestly prayer for the visible oneness of His disciples on the earth. . . . It is not essential that we become organically united, nor is it desirable in every instance; but it is important that we have spiritual communion, and that our fraternity be, in some way, embodied and emblazoned before the eyes of men. . . .

"But great as is the need that there should be fewer Methodist bodies—and this need will be generally recognized—the necessity is still greater that amongst all Methodists there should be fraternity and confederation. The way to this desirable result seems to be plainly indicated in the preliminary steps which led to the convening of this Ecumenical Conference. There have been, within certain limits and for given purposes, a representation and coöperation of the different Methodist organizations of all lands. . . . If these committees could be enlarged and continued, without executive power or legislative authority, but charged with the duty of consultation and advisory supervision of all Methodist interests, what occasions for differences they might remove, and what blessed impulses they might impart to our one mighty, matchless, majestic Methodism! . . .

"The chief thing needed is the spirit of fraternity, the life and love of Jesus, and a constant conviction that Methodism, however organized or distinguished, is a unity, and has one and the same work to accomplish."

The Reverend Dr. Otis H. Tiffany, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, said in the same Ecumenical Conference: "Organic union, if it were attainable, would not be found flexible enough in practice for a Providential

Church, which must enter every open door, and adapt its agencies to meet every pressing emergency. But unison in movement, and agreement in spirit, are certainly within our reach. . . . The world counts separation antagonism, failing to see the inter-communicating links which bind us to each other. It cannot see the relation of the subordinated denomination to the universal Church; it does not distinguish between the infinite dignity of the rock of ages, and the temporary homes men build upon its giant breast. But we must show and prove to them, and convince them, that tabernacles for Moses and for Elias do not diminish the infinite glory of the transfigured Christ. This we can do more surely by manifesting the spirit of Christ in our separate organizations than by consolidations and absorptions, and the spirit of love shall prove the unity of the Churches. . . . This would be practical union maintaining the validity of the existing Churches, but enlarging the scope of their influence as hand-in-hand they compass the world—their 'parish.'"

These were utterances at the First Ecumenical Methodist Conference. Had it not been a Pan-Methodistic body possibly the expressions might have had a more direct reference to some of the American Churches, but they were sufficient to indicate the trend towards fraternity, the recognition of "invisible unity," and the desire for general coöperation, though there was little or no emphasis placed on organic unity. Doctor George, however, in his address commended the union of the Wesleyan Methodists and the New Connexion Methodists in Canada and also the steps taken towards the organic union of the different Methodist bodies in Australia.

About three years after the First Ecumenical Methodist Conference occurred the hundredth anniversary of the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America which had been organized in the Christmas season of 1784. It was decided to celebrate that event by a Centennial Methodist Conference and the Centennial Conference was held in the city of Baltimore, Maryland, December 9–17, 1884.

This brought together representatives from different American Methodist Churches, especially from the Episcopal Methodisms, the chief of which were the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Their coming together in the Conference was calculated to start thought as to why there was not the unity that existed in the Christmas Conference one hundred years before, and that, doubtless, must have raised a question as to the necessity of so many divisions in 1884.

In the Pastoral Address "To the Methodist People in the United States and Canada," which was reported from a committee by the Reverend Bishop Stephen M. Merrill, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, there occurs the following:

"Not least among the evils we deplore as Methodists is the spirit of strife and division which, we are sorry to say, is not yet wholly eradicated from our Zion. Far be it from us to pronounce every division of the Church schismatical. There has been, doubtless, some providential ordering in the denominational organizations of Christendom, yet the multiplication of separate Churches on trivial grounds is not to be encouraged. We are happy to believe that the period of dissensions

is well-nigh over. We hail the dawn of the better day, and rejoice in the rising spirit of fraternity which promises much for the future success of the cause we love. From this time onward our principal rivalries should be to excel in good works. We congratulate our Canadian brethren upon the success which has attended their movement for uniting the forces of Methodism in the Dominion. May their highest anticipations be fully realized. We of the States may not follow their example in consolidation, but we should not fall behind them in 'endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace.'"

This was unanimously adopted.

Another significant proposition was in a paper numerously signed by representatives of five Methodist bodies, and presented by the Reverend J. B. McFerrin, D. D., of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Expressing the belief that the Centennial Conference had "strengthened the bond of brotherhood," the paper, among other things, had the following resolutions:

"*Resolved*, That we respectfully commend to the bishops of the episcopal, and the chief officers of the non-episcopal, Methodist Churches represented in this Conference to consider whether informal conferences between them could not be held with profit from time to time concerning matters of common interest to their respective bodies.

"*Resolved*, That we shall be greatly pleased to see these bonds of brotherhood and fellowship increased and strengthened more and more in the future.

"*Resolved*, That any occasion that may bring our respective Churches together in convention for the

promotion of these objects will always be hailed with profound satisfaction."

Bishop John M. Walden, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, moved that the paper be adopted by a rising vote, which was done.

Another fraternal incident was the following resolution offered by Dr. H. B. Ridgaway, Dr. W. L. Hypes, and Bishop R. S. Foster, all of the Methodist Episcopal Church:

"*Resolved*, That this Conference express its high gratification that the venerable Rev. J. B. McFerrin, D. D., Rev. Jesse Boring, D. D., Rev. James E. Evans, D. D., and Rev. Andrew Hunter, D. D., of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; and the Rev. Joseph M. Trimble, D. D., of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who were members of the General Conference at New York in 1844, have been present with us and have contributed by their counsels and prayers to the harmony of our session."

This was a graceful waving of the olive branch. In 1844 the General Conference was unharmonious but there was harmony in this Conference of 1884, and the representatives of both sides of the ancient controversy met, and were greeted, as brothers beloved. Of course the resolution was adopted.

The Second Ecumenical Methodist Conference was held in the city of Washington, in the month of October, 1891. In this were the representatives of world-wide Methodism.

Bishop Charles H. Fowler, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, said:

"There is but one law woven into the history of all peoples and filtered into the blood of all races and

molding the statesmanship of all ages, and that is this: *The enduring nations have been great nations. Unity is strength.*

"This law holds with unabated power over every branch of the Christian Church. It holds over the power of Methodism. You and I may nurse our petty politics and cavil about the size of a button or the cut of a garment and amuse ourselves with the shades of our brigade plumes while the common enemies of our evangelism march through the breaks in our ranks, leaving us in our weakness to mourn over our defeats. But there is a wiser and a wider statesmanship within our reach, which shall close up all breaks in the ranks of Methodism, economize all power in her vast expenditures, utilize the helpfulness of kindly friends, and compel the respect of the skeptical classes."

The Reverend A. S. Hunt, D. D., of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in his set address on "Christian Unity" said: "It seems to me, sir, that the followers of Christ of every name have occasion to deplore the fact that there is not more union—visible union—among them. While I must regard the union of all Christians in a single visible organization as impracticable, and perhaps undesirable, we surely ought to have far more union than now exists; and more we should have if at the outset we would keep clearly in mind the distinction between union and unity. . . .

"Let us, then, distinctly note that Christian union must be the outgrowth of Christian unity. Still further, Christian unity, as distinguished from Christian union, has various phases and degrees.

"There is a kind of unity which exists between two or more believers whose tastes and temperaments are

similar. Such unity may, indeed, be Christian, but it grows largely out of natural affinities. Again, we have a kind of unity which exists between believers who entertain kindred views concerning doctrines and modes of worship and church polity. This also is Christianity in part, but not wholly so. Once more, there is a unity of a higher and richer type which gives a subordinate place to matters of taste and temperament, to modes of worship and forms of church polity, and to minor points of doctrine, and consists in the blessed fact that believers are one in Christ Jesus; for we are, indeed, the body of Christ while we are members in particular. But, sir, there is something higher still. . . .

"If we ever need to remember the power of the supernatural it is when we are attempting to master this question of Christian unity. Turning to the Redeemer's prayer, we find Him asking 'that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us.' The Authorized Version reads: 'May be one in us,' but the Revised Version very properly omits the word *one*, as it is not in the text of the original. That they may be in us; that they may, by the help of God's grace, apprehend the unity of God, and dwell in that unity. We, even we, may be encompassed by the divine unity. When we enter this inner shrine, this holy of holies, and verily dwell in God, the question of our unity with all who truly love Christ finds its solution. There is no other solution which will bear all tests and endure forever. Here is the real secret of all genuine Christian unity.

"And now, sir, it is time for me to say that when this unity is apprehended it will ever be seeking to ex-

press itself in union. If we each and all were really dwelling in God it would be easy to recognize our family relationship, and manifest our delight in each other's prosperity. . . . If God will breathe upon us this spirit of unity I do not doubt that when our next Ecumenical Conference shall convene, while the aggregate membership of the Methodism of the wide world will be largely increased, the delegates assembled will not represent twenty-nine different Methodist organizations."

The Reverend C. F. Reid, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, said: "There are some things which we can do a great deal better by being more closely united: We do not presume at this time to ask you for an organic union, either on the mission field or among the Churches at home. That will come, we hope, in God's good time."

At the same session the Reverend E. E. Hoss, D. D., of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, said: "It is my distinct and deliberate conviction that our Methodist denominational divisions in America have been a great advantage to us. It is not my habit, Mr. President, to feel one thing in my heart and speak another thing with my lips. An organic unity of the different branches of Methodism in America is a problem which, if not impossible of solution, is at least one of tremendous difficulty. Leaving all other questions and all other considerations out of view, the size of the Methodist family in this country makes the problem of organic unity one of great difficulty. I have room enough in my heart for all of my brethren and sisters and their children, but I have not room enough for them in my house. Any Church has the right to main-

tain its distinct denominational existence as long as it stands for some vital aspect of Christian truth or some important feature of ecclesiastical economy, or as long as its existence is determined and required by external circumstances of the need and binding effect, of which it itself must be the judge.

"All movements towards unity must proceed upon the supposition of the absolute Christian equality of all the parties concerned. The size of the Church does not entitle it to any special consideration. The smaller bodies are equally to be consulted, and their opinions to have equal weight according to their worth. And then, if unity is to be secured, the different Churches must at once and forever stop their maneuvering for position as against one another.

"I do not hesitate to stand in my place here and say that when any Methodist denomination goes into a little village in which there is already a Methodist Church of another denomination, and builds a house and sends a pastor, it makes it absolutely unnecessary for the devil to be personally present in that village.

"I belong, Mr. President, to one of the border Conferences, and I know what I am speaking about. I do not for one single moment think that the Church of which I am a member has been utterly faultless in this matter, nor would I dare to say that other Methodist denominations have been utterly faultless. We have all been wrong. We ought to stop our nonsense and our unchristian conduct.

"If, by and by, an external organic unity comes, all right, let it come; but there is no immediate prospect of it, and if I ever see it at all I expect to see it from the heights of heaven."

The Reverend A. Coke Smith, D. D., of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, read an essay on "Christian Coöperation" in which he said: "Unity is not sameness, and the highest unity in purposes so far-reaching as those of the Gospel requires the greatest variety of endowment and work, and a mobility in form that can adapt itself to its ever-changing environment, and speak in word and deed to each age and nation in its own tongue. . . . The call for closer union among the Churches and for coöperation in all Christian work coming up from all directions is significant. . . . The movement of the Christian bodies towards each other is not a spurt of enthusiasm or a dream of visionaries. . . . There is certainly no purpose to attempt the organic unity of all the Churches. Such could only be in name and never in fact. Geography and climate, race, temperament, political institutions, the special needs of special times, all forbid the effort at uniformity in government and forms of worship did not common sense declare such uniformity unnecessary. . . . The organic union of all the Churches and the adoption of like forms in worship and government would prevent the adjustment of the Church to circumstances and hinder the advancement of the Gospel."

The Reverend T. J. Ogburn, of the Methodist Protestant Church, said: "By Christian coöperation we do not mean the organic unity of the Christian Church. It is rather the concrete expression of the Church's invisible but real spiritual unity. It is a practical unity; the best unity possible at present, and the easiest and speediest stepping-stone to that ideal organic unity for which so many have hoped and prayed, as yet in vain."

The Reverend E. L. Southgate, of the Methodist

Episcopal Church, South, in his address, remarked: "Now it occurs to me that the organic union so emphatically proposed by some of the brethren might prove to be a merely outward relation. The true union is a union that is based upon the Sermon on the Mount, and that has for its working plan the thirteenth chapter of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians."

The Reverend Bishop Randolph S. Foster, D.D., LL.D., of the Methodist Episcopal Church, followed up these addresses by remarks urging organic union, and especially between the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Among other things he said: "If organic union were possible there must be no question, it seems to me, in any mind that the power of this Methodism of ours would be tenfold if it were possible for us to bring ourselves into such close relations to each other as not only to coöperate, but to organize and systematize the work of this great Methodism of America, so that we should waste none of our force, but, on the contrary, utilize every bit of it for the salvation of the world.

"I do not know how soon that time will come. I have been praying for it for twenty-five years. I have been waiting and longing for twenty-five years. I represent a great Church—the great fragment or fraction, the greatest fraction of Methodism in America—and I am certain that the sentiment and the feeling of my Church for at least twenty-five years has been longing for the time to come when something could be done that would harmonize the movements of these great Methodist bodies in the United States, and when, as it seems to me, sir, the walls of separation might fall and entirely disappear.

"For myself I know of no reason—I can see no reason—I am unable to find a reason—why that great and honored branch of our Methodism, once united with us, once a part of our body, dear to us yet, dear as it ever was, cherished and honored and loved as they were when it was corporate with us—I say I can see no reason why these two great fragments of a once united Methodism should remain longer separate. Others may see reasons. I am unable to find them. When I go before God, when I consult my conscience, when I think of the influence that might arise from our union, I can find no reason why at least we should not so far be eye to eye as to come together like brothers well-beloved, and shake each other by the hand and look each other in the eye and talk to each other out of the heart and pray together before God that He will soon send upon us wisdom, so that in some way the deplored separation might be healed, and that united together, we might take possession, as we are able to do, of the North and of the South of this great land."

The Pastoral Address of the Second Ecumenical Methodist Conference had this to say on the question of general union between the various Methodistic bodies:

"We rejoice to recognize the substantial unity which exists among the various Methodist Churches. Its firm basis is a common creed. We are all faithful to the simple, Scriptural, and generous theology which God, through the clear intellect and loving heart of John Wesley, restored to his Church. The intellectual movement and the social changes of our time may have led to some change in the form of expression, or some shifting of the emphasis of our teaching, but they have not led us even to reconsider that living theology

which has abundantly proved itself upon our pulses. Indeed it would be strange if, while other Churches are drawing towards it, we should have departed from it. And there are other grounds of unity. We are proud of the same spiritual ancestry; we sing the same holy hymns; our modes of worship are similar; and what is most important of all, the type of religious experience is fundamentally the same throughout the Methodist world. Our ecclesiastical principles are not so various as the forms in which they are accidentally embodied. Rejoicing in these things, we think that the time has come for a closer coöperation of the Methodist Churches, both at home and abroad, which shall prevent waste of power and unhallowed rivalry; while before the eyes of many of us has passed the delightful vision of a time when, in each land where it is planted, Methodism shall become, for every useful purpose, one, and the Methodism of the world shall be a close and powerful federation of Churches for the spread of the kingdom of Christ."

XXIV

BOOKS ON THE QUESTION OF UNION BETWEEN THE CHURCH SOUTH AND THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

AS might have been expected from the degree of general interest in the question of union between the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and, particularly, from the special interest of individuals in the question, the literature on the subject has consisted not merely in printed addresses, in articles in various periodicals, and in the resolutions and other formulations of deliberative and legal bodies, but also in the issue of books of considerable importance and of more or less permanence.

The Reverend Erasmus Q. Fuller, D. D., of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who for years resided in the South, was the editor of *The Methodist Advocate* and was a member of several General Conferences of his Church. He wrote a book bearing the title "An Appeal to the Records: A Vindication of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Its Policy and Proceedings towards the South," which was published in 1876. This was a reply to a work entitled the "Disruption of the Methodist Episcopal Church," of which the Reverend Edward H. Myers, D. D., a prominent minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and for some years editor of the *Southern Christian Advocate*, was the author.

The full title which Doctor Myers gave his book is "The Disruption of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1844–1846, comprising a Thirty Years' History of the Relations of the Two Methodisms," and in the preface the author says: "This discussion comes opportunely to the members of the Church South, lest they be hurried away, by an ardent temperament that responds impulsively to the proffer of fraternity, from a consideration of those principles by which alone they can vindicate their past history and their permanent separate organization."

The point in this observation will be seen when it is recalled that efforts were being made to establish fraternal relations between the two Churches and that the meeting of the two commissions was soon to take place at Cape May at which meeting Doctor Myers was one of the representatives from the Church South.

Doctor Fuller took exceptions to the very title of Doctor Myers' book as containing "erroneous assumptions." Among these errors Doctor Fuller says: "The first is in the words, 'Disruption of the Methodist Episcopal Church,' as it is claimed in the work, by a full, distinct, purposed, and binding 'contract,' into two parts of the one Methodist Episcopal Church, equally the legitimate and legal representatives of the original body. This position of the author is not true; therefore this portion of the title of his book, as explained by himself, contains a false assumption. The second is in the words, 'The Two Methodisms.' This term is used by Doctor Myers to show that the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, are equally the representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church which once was, but which does not

now exist, it having been 'disrupted' into these two branches—which is not true, as the Methodist Episcopal Church, the original body from which the Southern Church separated, now exists in name, and in fact, in entirety, having never been 'disrupted' in such manner."

In referring to the work of Doctor Fuller, Dr. D. D. Whedon, editor of the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, remarks that "Doctor Fuller has here given Doctor Myers' book a very thorough and annihilating analysis."

About ten years after the publication of the books of Doctor Myers and Doctor Fuller a Southern preacher lifted up his voice and used his pen in the interest of union between the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Episcopal Church.

He was the Reverend John H. Brunner, D. D., a minister of the Church South, and a man of prominence in his denomination and his section, as will appear from the positions which he held. Among other things he was the President of Hiwassee College, in East Tennessee, and a writer of some note.

Doctor Brunner favored a union of some kind between his denomination and the Methodist Episcopal Church, but seems to have been in advance of his Church of that day on this subject.

From time to time he published articles in favor of union in the Church papers and later published a book entitled "The Union of the Churches" in which he incorporated many of the articles which he had written for the periodicals.

The general character of the work was an urgent plea for such a union, the necessity for which he based on various grounds.

In this work he quotes Southern men who were in favor of union. Thus he cites the Reverend John H. Parrott of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, as saying: "The two great bodies of Episcopal Methodism in our own country ought to be united on some basis." This was in an article which was printed in the *Knoxville Journal*, of January 4, 1886.

Referring to the action of the 1874 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which declared that "the reasons for the separate existence of these two branches of Methodism are such as to make a corporate union undesirable and impracticable," Doctor Brunner remarks:

"This then is the avowed policy of the Southern Methodist Church; the policy of the Northern Church being directly the opposite. On these two opposing lines the forces of the two Methodisms are now arrayed!

"Really, it is much like the Confederate War. The great preponderance of men and money is with the North. The sentiment of the world is on that side, as well as the patriotic sentiment of the country, among outsiders and other religionists. Then there is a 'union sentiment' inside the Southern Church, as there was inside the Confederacy—*a constantly growing force.* Add to all this 'the army of occupation'—the Northern network of conferences, districts, circuits, stations, schools, Sunday-schools, families—a membership reaching nearly up to that of the Southern Church in many places! . . .

"Yes, the Northern Church is here, and constantly adding to her resources. The Southern Church is circumscribed—dwarfed and segregative or exclusive, *with*

accelerating defections to the union side!—as doomed to succumb as was the Confederacy after the battle of Gettysburg! The old bosses are as fixed in their purpose as was Jeff Davis, despite the advice of Alex. Stephens. . . .

"The Northern Methodists erred in 1848 in rejecting fraternity, and in voting in the face of universal sentiment on the solemn league known as the Plan of Separation—and bitter has been the penalty; and now Southern Methodism errs by spurning proffers of union, thus offending universal public sentiment. Northern Methodism had the good fortune to see her mistake, and the grace to undo it by act and by declaration in the Cape May Commission settlement. Will the Southern Church be equally fortunate and wise in abandoning its untenable ground? . . .

"Hard sayings and hard doings among Methodists are not in place, and never have been. But some palliation may be found in the case of our Northern Methodist friends. Did they not come down, some 300,000 strong, in 1861–65? Did they not find the Southern Methodists arrayed against the government—some at home praying for Jeff Davis, and others in arms firing upon the *flag and the boys in blue?* There may have been exceptions—and there were—'*few and far between.*' Overzealous our Northern brethren may have been to teach the negroes (and preach to them in their alienation from Southern Methodism) and to help efface the fearful illiteracy in the Southern States. But they met no aid and comfort from Southern Methodists; but instead, the most unrelenting opposition! Faults there be; but they are not all within the pale of any one Church, any more than all fools belong to any one po-

litical party! There are two sides to every silver sixpence; and there are two sides to the question of the Southern work of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Southern Methodism lost its hold on negro confidence and of other confidence as well. The union of the two Methodisms would give the united Methodism access to all again. . . .

"A political party, that is coterminous with the nation, acts as a balance wheel in the machinery of government. *But sectional parties work mischief.* The seclusive policy of Southern Methodism is fatal to its perpetuity. Its great need is union and diffusion, or expansion."

These were strong words from a minister of the Church South who had been influenced by Southern interpretations and who dwelt in a Southern environment.

In 1892 the Reverend W. P. Harrison, D. D., of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, wrote and published a book entitled "Methodist Union."

Doctor Harrison in his work opposed the organic union of his own Church with the Methodist Episcopal Church, and for this opposition he gives several reasons, which may be briefly phrased as follows:

First, the union would make a very large ecclesiastical body.

Second, the danger in such a large body of partisan politics.

Third, the representative body would either be of unwieldy proportions, or the ratio of representation would be put at such a figure that the representation would not be fairly representative.

Fourth, that the geographical sections of the two

Churches are so different that the individuals, when brought together in one body, would not agree among themselves because of these sectional influences.

Fifth, that the Church South is nearly as unanimous at the present time as it was in 1844, while it is also prosperous and contented and simply desires to be let alone.

While Doctor Harrison rejects organic unity, he closes his book with this alternative suggestion:

"Speaking as an individual, the writer would prefer to see four grand divisions of Episcopal Methodism in America, the Eastern, Southern, Western, and the Colored General Conferences, the whole Church bound together by an advisory Council, representing Conference districts, and limited to the discussion of interests common to all, without authority over any. Such federation we believe to be feasible and desirable."

Further he says: "For the present, and as far into the future as it has been given us to see, the interests and welfare of our Southern Methodism imperatively demand the jurisdictional independence of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

"The subject of organic union of all the Episcopal Methodist bodies possesses a charm for many persons. But there are so many difficulties in the way of such a consummation that it is useless to discuss the question in any proposition that looks to the absorption of ecclesiastical government under one General Conference jurisdiction."

Then he adds: "There is, however, a more excellent way," and gives in detail his plan for a number of geographical divisions and a "Council" which would "have no legislative or judicial functions, but to be an advisory

body only," as he had previously said, "without authority over any."

This seemed to be the Southern idea of union in that day.

In the same year, Bishop Stephen M. Merrill, D. D., LL. D., of the Methodist Episcopal Church, brought out his book on "Organic Union."

Bishop Merrill occupied a position of peculiar fitness for the preparation of such a work and his early experiences formed a background from which his expressions on the subject of union came with a peculiar force. As he tells us in his "Introductory" written in December, 1891:

"He entered the ministry the year the division of the Church occurred, and through a door indirectly opened as the result of division, and afterwards spent some years on the debated ground, often coming in contact with the bitterest feelings engendered in the strife on the border; so that his recollections of the old debates are vivid, and sometimes sad. In his ministry in the times of slavery he has met organized mobs in his congregations; has been arraigned before mass-meetings of regulators, with a view to his expulsion from the state; has been presented to the grand jury for indictment under special legislation designed to send him to the State's Prison; has been threatened with bludgeons, tar-buckets, and bullets; and, therefore, he does not forget the former days, when to represent the Methodist Episcopal Church on Southern soil was at once a peril and an honor. After all, he bears no ill-feeling towards Southern people or Churches, but wishes and prays, not only for fraternity, but also for ultimate organic union."

This reveals the conditions of antagonism that existed over the slave border when in those times property, person, and life itself were in peril in the land of free speech and of free Churches, when Methodist Episcopal ministers preached to their own congregations within the bounds of their own Conferences, and, yet, this author who went through all this and on up to the episcopate has "no ill-feeling towards Southern people or Churches, but wishes and prays, not only for fraternity, but also for ultimate organic union."

His views in favor of "ultimate organic union" are not an impulse of a late moment. He tells the reader that "He is not a recent convert to the views he now holds," and that "What he believes to-day he has believed for more than a score of years, and his convictions have grown with advancing life."

Defining the issue, he says, "By the union of Methodist Churches is meant the consolidation of all the denominations of Methodism in the United States in one governmental jurisdiction"; but the chief purpose of the author is "to study the question of reunion in relation to the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South."

In reference to this question Bishop Merrill says: "There is little probability that organic union with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, will ever be consummated without a pretty thorough sifting of the old issues." This he thinks is necessary because in the Church South there has been generally a misinterpretation of the historic facts in regard to the cause of the separation by the Southern Conferences in 1845 and a misunderstanding of the action of the General Conference of 1844 and also a failure to

appreciate the decisions of the General Conference of 1848.

As to the assertion that slavery was not the "cause" but only the "occasion" of the division of the Church, Bishop Merrill maintains that: "Slavery, by its arrogance, rendered the agitation unavoidable. Slavery was therefore both the 'cause' and the 'occasion' of the division," that "slavery was the 'cause,' and that the action of the General Conference in the case of Bishop Andrew was the 'occasion' of that sad event."

Referring to the action of the General Conference of 1844, the author says: "The famous so-called 'Plan of Separation' was not a 'plan of separation' at all. It had no such purpose. . . . The General Conference of 1844 neither divided the Church, nor authorized its division. . . . It did not induce that act, nor authorize it, nor approve it; but anticipated it, and sought to provide against avoidable evils." But "the conditions were not met, and it never was lawfully carried into effect," while "The decision of the court (on the Book Concern) was reached after the consummation of the division, and largely on the ground of equity, which was scarcely disputed."

As to a "line" Bishop Merrill holds that the Church South "has gone outside of the limits originally imposed upon herself," and "that after fixing the line that was supposed to restrict their labors to the slaveholding states, our Southern brethren did not keep themselves to their own side of the line."

Notwithstanding all these things and differences of opinion on the two sides, the author insists that union is possible and that efforts should be made to bring it about. He says: "With the great mass of the mem-

bership of the Methodist Episcopal Church there is scarcely any consciousness of alienation. . . . Not one in a thousand has the slightest prejudice to overcome in according to the members of the Southern Church the fullest recognition and fellowship. When their attention is called to it, they simply wonder why there is a Southern Church. It can be assumed, therefore, that our people are ready for the reunion whenever it shall be brought about; and it is equally true that they are not fretted because of the delay." . . . "As the difficulties to be overcome are neither few nor small the warmest friends of the movement will be the most patient. No one will look for the consummation in a brief space of time. If it be accomplished within a generation, it may be accepted as an achievement of wise diplomacy and royal statesmanship, sustained by the noblest devotion to a cause which concerns the glory of God and the welfare of His kingdom."

As to the conditions of union he says: "All agree that if union comes it must be reached upon a basis honorable to all, and as the result of an inward persuasion which is so nearly universal as to be positively domination. Every one will concede that the movement, in order to be either desirable or successful, must be as nearly spontaneous as is possible—the outgoing of a conviction rooted in Christian sentiment and controlling the consciousness of duty. When such preparation comes, union will follow as naturally as ripened fruit drops to the earth."

The period of a generation which Bishop Merrill suggested has expired, and he himself has passed away, and yet the organic union has not come and the condi-

tions he indicated have not fully ripened, but this does not prove that the process is not going on.

In the same year, 1892, Bishop Randolph S. Foster, D. D., LL. D., of the Methodist Episcopal Church, wrote and published his book on "Union of Episcopal Methodisms." He appears not to have known of the purpose of Doctor Harrison and Bishop Merrill to write on this subject, and his work was written before their books appeared, and so he notes: "Since writing the preceding pages (the body of his book) Bishop Merrill's book on 'Organic Union' and Doctor Harrison's book on 'Methodist Union' have appeared."

Bishop Merrill, while he wrote particularly of the union of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, had in his treatment "The Organic Union of American Methodism" covering all the Methodistic bodies in the United States, but Bishop Foster limits himself to the "Union of Episcopal Methodisms," and further restricts himself to the question of organic union between two of the Episcopal Methodisms, namely, the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, though he has observations on the "Consolidation of sects" in general.

In his Introduction, Bishop Foster says:

"With respect to the practicability of the union of these two bodies, and with respect to the proper way of approaching it, and the necessary preliminary steps, there is room for difference of judgment and a demand for the exercise of patience and forbearance. . . . Patience, not haste—candor, not harshness—simplicity of aim, will lead us to the true goal, whether it be or not be the one we aim at."

In regard to the question of organic unity, he says: "There are three possible views: first, that organic unity is impracticable, and therefore they should remain as they are; second, that some adjustment other than that which at present exists should be sought, but not organic unity; third, that the two bodies should unite and become one."

The reasons for the several views he considers and presents in detail. Among other things he observes that: "The idea has been several times mooted of having two or three Episcopal white Methodisms on American soil, each assigned a geographical division of the country—one eastern, one western, one southern —the three sustaining federated relations similar to those of the states in the federal Union."

This, though plausible, he rejects absolutely, and says that, though "simple in appearance, it involves such complexities as to make it unworkable, or, if workable, beset with manifold difficulties. What hope is there that the sections could be induced thus to go asunder? . . . There is no probability that any such scheme will ever be adopted or even gravely entertained."

Then he gives various reasons in favor of the third view, namely, the uniting of the two bodies into one, and finally brings the reader "face to face with a remaining perplexity, namely, how to effect the union." Here "arise many questions and phases of difficulty," and to meet these he favors a commission to be created by each of the two General Conferences "to prepare a platform of union" to be duly submitted.

In his work Bishop Foster raises the questions: "What should be the relations of the white Method-

isms to the colored Methodisms? and along with it, What should be the relations of the colored members of our Methodism to the united colored Episcopal Methodism?"

Answering his own question he says: "If it may be for the reason that organic unity, all things considered, would not be for the best, then it may not only not be a sin to remain separate, but it would be a wrong to effect union if it were possible."

As to the relations of the white Episcopal Methodisms to the united colored Episcopal Methodisms if it should come to be an actualized fact, he says: "The two bodies should remain separate under existing facts, or that, whatever may be wise for the future, the time has not come for organic unity, if it shall ever come."

Again he says: "We proceed on the theory of a union of all the colored Episcopal Methodisms in one great organism." . . . "Organic unity with the colored Episcopal Methodisms is a question not even to be mooted, and in fact is not mooted," and so Bishop Foster favored the combination of all Colored Episcopal Methodists, including those who were in the Methodist Episcopal Church, into a united and separate body, thus making a White Episcopal Methodism and a Colored Episcopal Methodism, independent of each other.

XXV

FRATERNAL ADDRESSES ON UNION

IN the General Conferences of both the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, from 1874 and 1876 there have been fraternal addresses by representatives from both denominations and in these addresses there have been allusions not only to fraternity between the two Churches but also references more or less direct to the question of organic unity.

In 1882 there appeared before the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Nashville, Tennessee, a fraternal delegate from the Methodist Episcopal Church, who had been born on slave soil and who was for years in close contact with preachers and people of the Church South. He was the scholarly and eloquent Henry Bascom Ridgaway, D. D., named after Doctor Bascom, who became a bishop of the Church South. Doctor Ridgaway because of his early environments and his high standing in his own Church was peculiarly well fitted to voice the fraternal feelings of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

It was on the tenth day of May, 1882, that he delivered his address to the Church South General Conference. We present some extracts from that noted address. He said:

"I was born in the Methodist Episcopal Church just

before the division of 1844–1845 which separated it into two great families. Nurtured in that cradle of Methodism, Baltimore City, equipped for the ministry in the old historic Conference of which that city is the center, I was accustomed from childhood to hear the traditions of the worthy founders of the Church in the South, as well as in the North and West. The names of some of the devout, self-denying, and mighty men who planted Methodism in your fair land were as familiar as household words. Such was the power and popularity of one of these that my father, a plain farmer on the eastern shore of Maryland, after listening to his transcendant eloquence, went home and changed the name of his infant son from John Wesley to Henry Bascom. There may be nothing in a name. But I can say from personal recollections that the first thoughts of preaching the Gospel were awakened in that lad's mind when, as he was nearing his teens, godly men put their hands on his head and said: 'If he only makes as good and great a man as Mr. Bascom.' The Church could produce but one Doctor Bascom in the remarkable mental qualities with which nature had endowed him; but in spiritual grace God calls all to the highest attainments. The dream that was started, that somehow there was an obligation put upon me to be something, I very naturally conceived would receive its truest realization in the vocation of him whose name I bore. . . .

"Then, too, after the division, as a boy preacher on the border, in Virginia, I fought you. That is, I defended my Church by doing the work of an evangelist and building it up, all the harder, because the Southern preachers were around. I thought and felt then that

these Southern brethren were splendid fellows, and how I would love them if they would only keep on their own side and let my territory and people alone; and I could see the need of but one Methodism, especially as fat and flourishing as it was in the regions of the Shenandoah and old Loudoun.

"Ah, sir, those days were but as the innocent and harmless encounter of boys playing at fighting, compared with the dark and stormy days which, alas! too soon came upon us. The war-cloud passed over us, with its battles of fire and hail, sweeping down in its terrible course hundreds and thousands of the vigorous men and valiant youths of both sections of our common country. In the strife the Methodists, North and South, East and West, true to the instinctive earnestness characteristic of their religion, did their utmost in deadly array. With tongue, and pen, and sword on either side, they contested every inch of ground and every title of principle and law. But the war over, the bow of peace once again spanned the dark cloud as it receded.

"Happily for us, the brave men that fell in blood were not all that fell—slavery, the source of our discord, also fell and was buried; and not only 5,000,000 of slaves rose into liberty, but the nation, and no portion of it more than the Southern, rose into freedom and was delivered from the most difficult social, moral, and political problem which ever perplexed statesmen or burdened the consciences of good men.

"From the hour when national peace was established and the broad and equal guardianship of the Union was again thrown over all the states and territories of our country, there has been *a growing desire among Methodists North and South that the old bonds of a former*

love and amity should be reasserted. There has been an effort to forgive and to forget the differences of the past, and indeed to overlook as far as possible the things in which we yet differ, and to draw closer together on the ground in which we agree, and where we can stand and act as brethren. I need not rehearse the successive steps by which we have been approaching each other. The fraternal salutations exchanged through official representatives in both our General Conferences; the devout, spiritual reunions at Round Lake and other camp-meetings; the legal settlement of the Cape May Commission, duly ratified by our General Conference at Cincinnati; and, finally, the moral influence of the grand Ecumenical Council in London; these, the more marked and formal agencies, to say nothing of the less conspicuous and silent, but not the less efficient, processes of individual, social, and commercial intercourse, have been carrying forward the work of healing and reconciliation, until we feel that we are very near to each other, and that *there are more things in which we agree than those in which we differ*, and that those things in which we agree are far more important than those in which we differ. . . .

"As I stand before you with a message of love and peace, I am bound to rejoice with you in the rich heritage which you possess in common with ourselves as Episcopal Methodists. Our genesis is the same. 'Whose are the fathers?' The memory of the men who founded Methodism in the New World is yours as ours. Their work is at the foundation and in the superstructure of your Church; their history is in your books; they live in your hearts. Like the odor of sweet ointment poured forth, their names everywhere

penetrate the atmosphere North, South, East, and West, and the perfume that they exhale cannot be confined to any section of the country or branch of their successors. . . .

"Mr. Chairman, as I talk on and feel the memories of our primitive past stealing upon me and think of the days when we were all one; as I feel the memories of this later charity which, like *the rising tide, is sweeping in upon us*, I not only rejoice in fraternization, true and heartfelt, which we this day realize, as in the name of bishops, 16,000 ministers, travelling and local, well-nigh 2,000,000 members and 1,500,000 children and youth, I shall shake hands with you and the hundreds of thousands who stand around you, but *I devoutly pray that we may be drawn yet closer and closer together, until differences shall vanish in the beautiful oneness of American Methodism.*

"There is a word I would like to speak, but perhaps I dare not. My Church has not authorized me to speak it. You, my hosts, may not be ready for it, and I must not violate your hospitality. It is not a big word, nor a long one, but my heart is full of it. Time will bring it. There are some things which cannot well be hurried, and this is one of them. But this question of the Organic Union of Episcopal Methodism, to say nothing of other forms of Methodism on our continent, is one which some men are thinking about and strongly desiring. There are some subjects, says Goethe, which, though they are not definitely formulated, do yet, like the sound of bells, get all abroad on the air. A layman octogenarian, away down in Maine, born, by the way, in the same township as your venerated Bishop Soule, wrote me a short time since, 'We

want here organic union.' Another octogenarian, a layman of Cincinnati, eminent for his intelligence, and piety, and liberality, said to me just before I left home, 'We want it; there is no reason why it should not be.' These old men may be too far ahead of their times. But like God's great seers standing on the mountain peaks which kiss the skies, they catch the very first streaks of the dawning new light which is rising, and destined to shine athwart our whole Church, North, South, East, and West.

"If reunion is right and for the glory of God, it will come; if not, may Heaven put it forever away! For my own part, I dare not oppose, I cannot be indifferent to it; *I must pray and hope for its consummation, because I believe it will be for the glory of God, the good of the whole people, and the stability of our Republic.*

"There is no bond like the religious bond to cement and compact the communities of a country into solid strength. But I am willing to wait God's time. When I was a little boy I often tried to knock apples from the trees before they were ripe; but as I grew older I found after they were ripe they would either fall of themselves, or needed only *a gentle shake.*

"We need a little more love. We need baptism after baptism of the Spirit, the fire that melts, dissolves the souls of the people into one free-moving stream of love. . . . *May God speed the day!*"

This eloquent and pathetic pleading for organic union is a good specimen of the thought and feeling in the addresses of the fraternal delegates from the Methodist Episcopal Church through a period of over forty years, and, though organic unity has not come within that time, the feeling is likely to continue.

Two years later the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church met, and to this Conference of 1884 came fraternal delegates from the Church South. The Reverend Charles W. Carter came with friendly greetings but in his address there was no proffer or suggestion of organic union. The other delegate, the Honorable A. H. Colquitt, brought a message of love and peace, but his address contained no proposal of organic unity. So the expressions of Doctor Ridgaway in 1882 were not reciprocated in the return addresses though their spirit was most brotherly.

At the General Conference of 1888, the Reverend Samuel A. Steel, D. D., represented the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. His address breathed a loyal American spirit, and urged practical fraternity and harmony between the two Churches, but there was no plea for organic unity.

The fraternal delegate from the Church South to the Methodist Episcopal General Conference in 1892 was the Reverend Dr. J. J. Tigert, afterwards made a bishop. He bore the fraternal salutations of his Church and stood for fraternity, but nothing beyond that. He spoke of constitutional differences between the two Churches, in which he referred to the College of Bishops as a coördinate body with a limited veto power over legislation, denied the power of a General Conference to finally "judge of the constitutionality of its own acts," and maintained that the power to finally interpret the Constitution and that which is constitutional "belongs alone to the Annual Conferences." He said: "Our Churches, Mr. President, are not only twins; they are Siamese twins. . . . There is a free circulation of warm heart's blood be-

tween the two bodies—distinct yet united." "Our two Methodisms, Mr. President, are like the two olive trees and the two candlesticks of apocalyptic vision, which stand before the Lord of the earth. They are fruit-bearing and light-giving."

With him they are always two and distinct and there is no suggestion of organic union.

In the General Conference of 1896 there appeared as fraternal representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the Reverend Dr. J. C. Morris and the Honorable G. B. Perkins. They both brought the fraternal greetings of their denomination.

Doctor Morris said: "We are brethren, having a common parentage, a common name, one symbol of faith, and we are seeking to do the same work in the world," and "these two branches of Methodism, though 'distinct as the waves,' are yet 'one as the sea,'" and, speaking of "the unity and continuity of Methodist teaching upon the subject of Christian experience," he said: "The solidarity of the Methodist in this respect is of the first importance. It does not matter so much that we attain organic unity. So long as we are not alienated in heart or divided by unbrotherly strifes we can afford to live within separate ecclesiastical lines, and leave the good providence of God to bring about the end He may desire," but there was no proffer of, or expressed wish for, organic unity.

So the Honorable G. B. Perkins said he came "from one branch of a common family: to bring its greetings to the grand council of another," and spoke of the conflict of the Puritan of the North and the Cavalier of the South, but there was no phrase breathing a suggestion in favor of organic union between the two denominations.

The Reverend Dr. E. E. Hoss was the delegate from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to the Methodist Episcopal General Conference of 1900. He restated the view of the Church South as to the episcopacy and the limitation on the General Conference in the matter of passing upon the constitutionality of its own acts, and said: "In our years of separation we have doubtless drifted apart in some outward and noticeable particulars. But a careful study of the two Episcopal Methodisms, made in large part on the ground where they are both actually at work, has served to convince me that, after all, the differences between them are infinitesimal when compared with the points in which they agree. Superficially disunited, they are yet linked together by a thousand ties as close and holy as the love of God can make them. Even in outward aspects, they are as much alike as two handsome sisters, each one of whom, while retaining her individuality of expression and bearing, also carries all the family marks," but he had no proffer or suggestion of organic unity.

To the General Conference of 1904, the Reverend John C. Kilgo, D. D., was accredited as fraternal delegate from the Church South. He also brought "assurances of fraternal esteem with unstinted cordiality," and uttered many lofty truths, but, while he said: "A unified Christian Church—'unified in a heavenly communion rather than compacted into an earthly corporation'—is the supreme need of the age. The day of segregations, of prejudices, of provincialism, of antagonism and sectional strifes should be fully past in this land. Americans are not tribal pagans masquerading in sacerdotal robes, and strifes and divisions do not become this nation within whose borders the note of Christian

song is never hushed," yet, notwithstanding the note of fraternity and fellowship, he raised no voice for a communion that was organic in a single external ecclesiasticism.

The Reverend Collins Denny, D. D., was the fraternal delegate from the Church South to the Methodist Episcopal General Conference of 1908, which met in Baltimore. He brought from his Church its "affectionate salutations, its warm assurance of fraternal regard." He could say, as he did in his words of farewell: "I am the third of my generation to preach the Gospel in the Methodist pulpits of this city. My own grandfather, who died within my own memory, died a member of your Church. My uncle (the Reverend John A. Collins), through his long life, was very highly honored among you," and yet, with all this lineage of which he was proud, he had not a single suggestion in favor of the organic union of his Church with the Church of his forefathers. Truly he could say: "I could not be among the delegates to a General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church without considerable feeling and without its being necessary to lay a very strong pressure upon the emotional side of my nature," but there was voiced no wish that the two Churches might be once again a united ecclesiasticism—one Methodist Episcopal Church for the whole country.

To the Methodist Episcopal General Conference of 1912 the fraternal delegate from the Methodist Episcopal Church was the Reverend Frank M. Thomas, D. D. He spoke friendly and gracious words, as had others, but he went further and favored some form of union between the two Churches, though he did not appear to have a settled plan by which it might be brought about. On

this matter he said: "Believing that a majority of the Methodists on this Continent earnestly desire some solution of the problems before us, believing that our risen Lord is commanding us by His Spirit to seek and find a solution of the problem of a divided and overlapping Methodism, I am here to speak to you frankly and freely. I dare not affirm that all I say will be indorsed by the entire ministry and membership of my Church, but I do say that a large majority of them are deeply concerned about the problem of Methodist unification. . . .

"There are three classes of Methodists in America. There are those who are pessimistic as to any solution of the problem. They would have each Methodism go on its way, loving and respecting the rights of the other. . . . Two mighty armies, though loyal to the same flag, cannot safely maneuver over the same field. . . . Then there are those who believe the problem of American Methodism to be one of easy solution. They would heal the breaches of the past by a simple fusion of the two Episcopal Methodisms. They would restore by vote the ecclesiastical status as it existed prior to 1844. Such a solution is deserving of careful attention. On its face it seems the logical thing to do, but when other facts are taken into consideration, when the mind which desires above all things to keep the spirit of unity in the bond of peace will inquire if some other solution be not possible."

Then Doctor Thomas points to divergencies which in the course of years have developed in both denominations. So he says: "Seldom in nature or in political or ecclesiastical history do we find two organisms having a common origin, but long separated, achieving re-

union by simple fusion. It is a fact of biology that each separate organism develops its own individual life and as time elapses its distinguishing characteristics become more marked. Whether for good or evil, the two Episcopal Methodisms have developed in their separation marked divergencies. Some of these can be accounted for by environment, and some are due to a different mental standpoint in regard to a few fundamental aspects of life. To ignore present differences and by simple fusion attempt to restore the status as it existed seventy years ago would be an unwise policy, especially as regards my own Church. We have already found it difficult to wisely legislate for our whole connection, especially in local matters. How difficult, then, for a consolidated, unrestricted General Conference, representing reunited Methodism, to wisely legislate in some matters for New England and Georgia at the same time. Even the Congress of the United States, itself a double body, does not attempt such a task, but leaves local legislation to the State Legislatures. Considering the differences of thought and life which still exist in America, to attempt such a perilous experiment just now, when the Hand of Blessing seems laid so generously upon Southern Methodism, would, in the judgment of our most thoughtful men, be assuming too great a risk for the ark of God."

All of which suggests some form of state sovereignty and is against the union of the two Churches in one government for the entire territory of the proposed united Church. But even the Congress of the United States legislates for the whole country. The drift of the argument is in favor of sectional rather than general government for such a united Church, and each Church in

such a union would have less general power than the Churches now have.

Then pointing to what in the Methodist Episcopal Church the Church South considered a doubtful radicalism, Doctor Thomas remarked: "And there are those among us in the South who feel, even if there were not profound divergence in life and thought, that just at this time when there seems to be such a widespread call for radical changes in your (Methodist Episcopal) polity, it would be wise to wait and see if the iconoclast is to have his way. He is a gentleman very much abroad in the modern world, both in Church and State. With no deep grasp on the truths of life and history, he is, when a layman, guided largely by economic expediency. When a minister, he is merely the sport of the monistic wash which the wave of Hegelianism has left on the sands of the twentieth century. He is in favor of the abolition of the eldership., the institution of a diocesan episcopacy, with a very strong drift towards a congregational polity. He would ruthlessly remove from the Methodist Church every fingerprint of the mightiest man of modern times, John Wesley. . . .

"Therefore, we of the South, still enamored of the old Methodist system, are waiting to see how far the spirit of expediency shall lay its dissolving touch upon your great Church. We view with apprehension some changes which you have already made, and regard as extremely perilous some suggestions now before you for action. It may seem an impertinence for us to say anything concerning your domestic problems. If so, pardon it as a sister's solicitude. For we would regard it as nothing less than a national calamity should you lose

the distinguishing mark of Episcopal Methodism. We might be compelled to drop the word 'South,' and become the sole Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America!"

This was not a pleasantry but a serious intimation that the Church South was in no haste as to the matter of union, and that it would not unite if what it regarded as a radical spirit should continue in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Then he specifies the episcopacy and the presiding eldership. Beginning with the district superintendent, the Doctor said: "Some laymen among you have been so industriously decrying him that the microbe has crossed our border, and occasionally we find a preacher or layman advocating a diocesan episcopacy and the abolition of the eldership."

To these movements he objected and intimated that they repelled the Church South.

Proceeding, he observed that "There are many in American Methodism, North and South, who believe that the creation of a truly national Methodism is not an impossibility. Notwithstanding the many difficulties in the way, they believe that there are rising the outlines of a mightier and nobler Methodism than this continent has yet known. . . . I have faith to believe, in the face of many difficulties, that through federation, adjudication, or unification, American Methodism will yet be one."

Again he said: "May we not lay the foundations of a united Methodism in peace and love, and trust our General Conferences, aye, command them, to slowly bring it to legal perfection?"

But with all this kindly expression it was plain that this fraternal delegate from the Church did not believe

in a union by a mere fusion or blending of the two bodies into one without any preliminary stipulations as to the nature of the combination. His idea evidently meant a relation that recognized differences in fact and view and that instead of blotting out peculiarities would perpetuate them in various geographical localities. This is shown also in his reference to a recently proposed suggestion to divide the whole country into great geographical sections which would practically be self-governing. That is to say, the Church South section would still be the Church South section, and the union would not be a union with a common government as now is the case with a nation-wide Church. Furthermore it was distinctly intimated that if what the South regarded as "radical changes" in polity in the Methodist Episcopal Church were to prevail and "the iconoclast is to have his way," the Church South would not only "wait and see" but it would not unite in any way but would "be compelled" to assert itself to be, "and become the sole Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America." In other words there was no direct and immediate assurance of the willingness of the Church South to form a union "through federation, adjudication, or unification," and if there was to be any closer relationship it was apparently to be a combination by federation in some form rather than a fusion which would have a pervading and uniform oneness.

To those who think that the uniting of two Churches is an easy matter of a moment may be presented Doctor Thomas's cautionary remark that "The task of unifying American Methodism will not be the work of a day. . . . The unification of American Method-

ism must be preceded by 'a firm league of friendship' which shall bind each Church to assist the other, and in honor prefer the other where the other has a right to be preferred." As to this one may ask, Who is to judge and determine?

Again Doctor Thomas said: "Not easily will institutions, rooted in tradition and buttressed by dogma, change their forms and coalesce into new organizations. Not rashly will Churches, which have a free and abundant life, consent to exchange their safety and freedom for the perilous path of a huge ecclesiasticism."

The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, meeting in Baltimore in the year 1908, sent a deputation to visit the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church assembled at the same time, in the city of Pittsburgh. With the fraternal deputation, headed by Bishop Henry W. Warren, went an address which had been adopted by the Methodist Episcopal General Conference on the 11th of May, 1908.

This address formed the body of the credentials for the deputies which they presented to the Methodist Protestant Conference. In it the Methodist Episcopal General Conference proposed that the two Churches become one. Thus it said: "Having a common origin, holding a common faith, possessing so much of discipline and policy in common, and above all, the deep-rooted and growing conviction that the union of the various Methodisms would strengthen the local Churches, secure economy of resource, make for aggressive evangelism, and hasten the kingdom of our Lord, they earnestly desire that the Methodist Episcopal and Methodist Protestant Churches shall become organically one.

"That the Methodist Episcopal Church, in General Conference assembled, hereby most cordially invites the Methodist Protestant Church to unite with the Methodist Episcopal Church in order that, as one great Methodist body, they and we may fulfill the better our individual commissions by preventing the waste of rivalry and exalting the God of peace."

On the 22d of May, 1908, the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church drew up and adopted a reply to the above communication of the Methodist Episcopal General Conference. In this response were recited propositions which had been received for the organic union of the Congregational, United Brethren, and Methodist Protestant Churches, and referring to the action of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church "proposing the renewal of organic fellowship with them as the beginning of a movement for a reunited and common Methodism in America," it said:

"The General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church hails with joy these tokens of the triumph of love and unity in the Church of the loving Christ." Then it said the Church responded "to the powerful and loving appeal of the Methodist Episcopal Church with loving and appreciative happiness," and felt under obligation "to carry on this appeal to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and to other Methodist bodies in America, until the sun shall no more rise upon the divided and scattered children of Wesley, but our united country shall rejoice in a united Church that will need no other name than 'The Methodist Church of America.'"

One of the resolutions adopted by the Methodist

Protestant Conference, and incorporated in the reponse said: "We respond heartily to the proposal of the Methodist [Episcopal] Church, not unmindful of the difficulties to be overcome before a satisfactory conclusion can be reached, but ready to go as far and as rapidly, in consummating a universal Methodism, as the interests and integrity of our own denomination will permit; and to pray continually for the full realization of their and our hope."

The Methodist Protestant General Conference appointed a commission to meet with like commissions from other Methodistic bodies, and also appointed three fraternal deputies to convey the greetings of that body to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

After the presentation and reading of their credentials to that General Conference on the twenty-sixth day of May, 1908, these deputies, namely, the Reverend T. H. Lewis, D. D., LL. D., President of the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, the Reverend A. L. Reynolds, D. D., and the Honorable J. W. Hering, LL. D., were introduced and addressed the body.

Doctor Lewis spoke most eloquently in behalf of a reunited Methodism in America. Thus he said: "In the eighty years that have intervened since the sad separation of the daughter from the family home we have never ceased to honor and love the family name; we have never ceased to labor in the great mission of Methodism, namely, 'to spread Scriptural holiness over these lands'; and we have never ceased to believe and to pray that some time, His own good time, God will bring again the scattered tribes of Methodism together,

'and Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.'

"It will not seem strange to you, I am sure, that we have not all made up our minds what our immediate duty is in this great matter. The change of Church relations is a solemn responsibility, never to be entered upon unadvisedly, but reverently, discreetly, and in the fear of God. . . . You do not expect and we do not understand that our membership, Churches, Conferences, and institutions are simply to be emptied out of one bag into another. You are big enough to hold us, but you are too big to want us in that fashion. It will take time and patience, much wisdom and great love, to adjust all the details of such a union. But that such a union is honorable and possible and desirable, I have not the slightest doubt."

Doctor Reynolds said: "Representing the ministers of the Methodist Protestant Church, it is my great pleasure to assure you that we are ready to meet with you and treat with you upon a basis of union honorable alike to all. We came out from you. It may be possible that our essential differences may no longer need to be causes of division. If so, it may be possible that we, as one of the smaller bodies, may in some divinely directed way be permitted to be a mediator of Methodisms, and in this contemplated Methodist merger bring about the glorious millennium of Methodism."

The Honorable W. J. Hering spoke in a similar strain and said: "We earnestly pray that, if God will, it may speedily come, when all the Methodisms of this great country of ours will be one."

After these addresses had been delivered, Bishop Warren vacated the chair and graciously invited Doc-

tor Lewis to occupy it and preside. Doctor Lewis did so, and Bishop Warren, addressing the Methodist Protestant chairman of the Methodist Episcopal General Conference, replied in fitting phrases, and closed by saying: "Brethren, nothing is impossible at the foot of Calvary. And all these difficulties will be forgotten. The action upon which we have entered will be continued in separate Conferences, in individual Churches, and reports be made to the next Conference. And so the benediction of God shall come upon the united Churches."

It was a memorable occasion, but the years have passed, and the union has not yet come.

XXVI

ATTEMPTS AT FEDERATION BETWEEN THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND THE CHURCH SOUTH

THE sanguine conclusions of the "Cape May Commission" in the summer of 1876 were hardly sustained by the facts of subsequent years. The report of that joint commission of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, set forth that the commission had reached "a unanimous agreement of complete fraternity," that there would be known "no unfraternal Methodism in the United States, or even in the wide world," and that "These fraternized Churches have no further occasion for sectional disputes or acrimonious differences."

The benediction was pronounced, the ecclesiastical sky seemed serene, and kindly souls rejoiced, but that the outcome was all that the commission anticipated the facts of history do not prove.

That was forty-nine years ago—almost half a century ago—and any one who knows the history would not dare to say that there have been no "acrimonious differences," or that there was and has been "complete fraternity" between the two Churches ever since the adjustment made by the "Cape May Commission."

Though it may be true that "these fraternized Churches" had "no further occasion for sectional dis-

putes or acrimonious differences," nevertheless everything was not settled by and after the Cape May Commission, for the unfortunate fact is that differences did develop and various difficulties did exist or were asserted to exist.

Certain property claims were adjusted and certain principles were laid down but these arrangements did not produce complete harmony. Many believed that something more was needed and from time to time attempts have been made to promote a more perfect fraternity between the two bodies, especially where they have been working in the same locality and more particularly in the South.

For a considerable time the familiar words used to express the desired feeling and relation were fraternal and fraternity, but gradually another word was substituted for fraternity. This word was federation.

Evidently federation was meant to stand for something stronger and closer than fraternity, and, yet, in many minds there has been no clear comprehension as to what this so-called federation means and represents between these two Churches.

In a general sense, and to most persons, federation and confederation have the idea of combination or some form or degree of union. Thus, to federate, Latin *fœderatus*, pp. of *fœderare*, to establish by league, from *fœdus*, a league, is to unite in a league or federation; to organize under a federal government.

This idea of federation, however, did not mean practically a combination or union of the two denominations, but merely an effort through representatives of both bodies to settle differences as to the forming of congregations, the building of churches, and the inau-

gurating and carrying forward of various forms of work where both denominations are present and, per haps, are competing in and for a particular locality.

Plainly such federation does not mean organic union, for each Church preserves its separate existence and independence.

Some have sought to interpret the supposed principle as meaning that where one Church exists in a city or other locality the other should not enter, and some in the Southern section of the country have practically construed the principle to mean that the Methodist Episcopal Church has no right to go into or be in the South because the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has been somewhere in that section.

That has been the logic of some Southern leaders who have held that the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America has no right anywhere in the South and that it should get out of the South entirely and forever, and that the Church South is the only Methodist Episcopal Church that has any right in the South, say below the Ohio River.

Even very recently a writer from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, so interpreted the idea of federation as meaning that the Methodist Episcopal Church should depart from the Southern section of the country.

Thus, in the New Orleans *Christian Advocate* of October 21, 1909, a minister of the Church South says:

"We must hold to the real meaning of federation, namely, that it is *opposed to organic union.* The very definition of federation *shuts out organic union*, for federation is based on the expectancy of the permanency of separateness and self-control in each member joining

the compact. . . . If, therefore, the Methodist Episcopal Church is working, as many of us think, for organic union, it is unfair and insincere to cover their effort with a proposed federation. . . . If the Methodist Episcopal Church goes into federation as federation, she must recognize the territory ceded to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at the time of the division by the General Conference of 1844."

As a matter of fact the General Conference of 1844 did not divide the Church. Neither did it cede any territory to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and it had no right to cede any territory in the United States of America. The Church South was not in existence in 1844, and only came into existence in 1845 after certain parties had voluntarily withdrawn from the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Then if there was any uncertainty about the action of 1844, the General Conference of 1848 cleared that away by declaring the action of 1844 to be invalid, and the Annual Conferences nullified its proposition by refusing to concur. Further if anything remained of the above interpretation of the action of 1844 it was swept away by the results of the Civil War and the elimination of slavery which was understood by some to mark a line. Still further, the interpretation was cancelled by the Church South when it carried its Church work into the North, as it began to do in the forties and when, after the Civil War, its General Conference of 1866 formally declared there was no restricting line and so abrogated any line as it had previously by its own movements abandoned any line for which at any time it had contended, so that now, when, for from fifty to seventy years, both Churches have by their actions

asserted there was no restricting line, it is too late to claim that the Church South has any exclusive right to the Southern section of the United States.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding the fact that the Church South had abandoned in 1866 the indefinite line which it had claimed and had abrogated any and every asserted line, the writer just quoted at this late period claims, as have others, that there cannot be any federation with the Methodist Episcopal Church that does not keep the latter Church out of the South, and this is a specimen of one form of Southern logic bearing upon federation as viewed by not a few in that part of the land.

If such Southern thinkers object to the Methodist Episcopal Church being in the South on the ground that the northern border of the South was the dividing line between the two Churches, it might be asked why then has the Church South gone into many Northern States, and even up into Oregon, which it did as early as 1849? Why, it may be asked, if there was such a line, did the Church South go into the North and why has it projected and carried on extensive operations north of the line of the thirteen Southern Conferences which withdrew in 1845? Even the city of Washington, in the District of Columbia, never was in the territory of the withdrawn Conferences of 1845. The fact that the Church South goes into the North and West, according to its own pleasure, shows that the Church South does not recognize any restricting line of division and, consequently, there is no barrier to keep the Methodist Episcopal Church out of the South.

Yet, strange to say, some Southern leaders and writers persist in an idea of Federation that means a process

that if carried out would "federate" the Methodist Episcopal Church entirely out of the South.

The remark of the chairman of the Committee on Church Relations in the 1914 General Conference of the Church South, "that where either Methodism is established and doing the work of Methodism the other shall not enter," might be construed as meaning that as the Church South is in the South, the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America has no right in the South, but this would mean also that the Church South should retire from the North and West and restrict itself to the South of 1844 and 1845. This, however, would not be a federation but a division of the country, and, with both Churches refusing to recognize any limiting line of division, it is too late in the day for those of a certain Southern school of thought to practically or actually assert that there is a geographical line of separation between the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, that excludes the former denomination from the South.

However, from the word and idea of fraternity, the Churches have passed to the use of the word federation, and though with many it would still seem that the word has no very distinct definition and the average mind has no clear conception of what is intended, nevertheless there has been forming an idea of federation which implies that both Churches may be in the South.

This idea of federation that permits both denominations to be in the same section, the same city, or the same town, is a broadening of the concessions of the Cape May Commission of 1876, which admitted the fact and right of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the South.

In the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, held in 1894, and on the 19th of May, the following was adopted:

"*Resolved*, by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, now in session, That the bishops be requested to appoint a Commission on Federation, consisting of three bishops, three ministers, and three laymen, and that the secretary be instructed to notify the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church of this action, and request it to appoint a similar commission.

"*Resolved*, That this commission shall have power to enter into negotiations with said similar commission from the Methodist Episcopal Church, if one shall be appointed, with a view to abating hurtful competitions and the waste of men and money in home and foreign fields.

"*Resolved*, That any arrangements which such commission may make shall be reported to the next General Conference for adoption, alteration, or rejection."

The commission, therefore, had no final power, but was merely to confer. Then it was to report to its General Conference which reserved all authority in the matter of determination. It will be seen also that the proposal was not for organic union but simply an agreement to prevent injurious competitions between the two denominations and waste of men and money by either Church, and the terms were such that they might be interpreted differently by either party as each might have a different opinion as to whether a given movement was a "hurtful competition" or a particular expenditure was a "waste."

The next General Conference of the Methodist Epis-

copal Church, that of 1896, ordered a corresponding "Commission on Federation"[1] in response to the Church South.

As the Journal of 1900 recites: "The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1896 met this overture in a fraternal spirit, and requested the bishops to appoint a similar commission with equal power, which they did."[2]

As has been observed, this proposition for a Commission on Federation was not a proposition for organic union, or a looking in that direction, on the part of the Church South. Long years before that Church had declared that fraternity or federation was very different from organic unity. Thus in its General Conference of 1874, the Church South declared that "Organic union is not involved in fraternity."

In the mind of the South federation merely meant a form of action for a common purpose by two decidedly different and independent bodies. In its view federation was in the interest of the Church South and was intended primarily to defend the Church South from the incoming and spread of what many people in that section were pleased to call the Northern Church.

The two Commissions on Federation met and formulated certain recommendations. Among other things, this joint commission recommended "the taking of prompt steps for the preparation of a common Catechism, a common Hymn Book, and a common order of public worship, and that other branches of Methodism be invited to coöperate in this undertaking."

One formulation of the joint commission was "That

[1] General Conference Journal, 1896, p. 101.
[2] *Ibid.*, 1900, p. 367.

we recommend the respective General Conferences to enact provisions to the effect that where either Church is doing the work expected of Methodism the other Church shall not organize a society nor erect a church building until the bishop having jurisdiction in the case of the work shall be consulted and his approval obtained."

This logically meant that the two denominations might work in the same section or territory, and in the same place, if the bishop of either denomination in charge was consulted and gave his consent, so that the work of the one Church might go on if its bishop approved and the work of the other denomination could go on in the same place if the consent of its bishop was secured.

Then there might be a difference of opinion as to whether one or the other Church was "doing the work expected of Methodism," and each one might, and probably would insist it was so working, and either one might say the other was not "doing the work expected of Methodism" or not doing it fully and insist upon entering the particular field. Under such circumstances who would have the final decision? Each side would judge for itself.

The joint commission also recommended the two General Conferences "to adopt measures for the joint administration of our publishing interests in China and Japan," and commended to the two General Conferences "the consideration" of "the principle and desirability of coöperative administration" "among our missions in foreign lands."

The Methodist Episcopal General Conference of 1900 approved and adopted "the acts passed by the joint

Commission on Federation,"[1] and this certainly looked like progress in the matter of "federation," though there was no action or suggestion upon the matter of organic unity.

In 1904 the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church passed an act on the "Federation of Churches," and it was placed in the Appendix to its Book of Discipline for that year, as ¶ 50, immediately after the act on "Union with other Churches," as follows:

"¶ 50. FEDERATION OF CHURCHES.

"First. We accept and adopt the action of the joint Commission on Federation providing for a common Hymnal, a common Catechism, and a common Order of Worship for the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

"Second. This General Conference hereby approves and adopts the acts passed by the joint Commission on Federation of the Churches to the effect that where either Church is doing the work of Methodism the other Church shall not organize a society or erect a church building until the bishop having jurisdiction in the case of the work proposed shall be consulted and his approval obtained.

"Third. We agree with the Episcopal Address, that steps might be wisely taken towards a more facile interchange of ministers and members, and to promote other measures of practical fraternity between the two chief branches of American Episcopal Methodism, and refer the subject to the Board of Bishops and to the joint Commission on Federation, to adopt such measures

[1] General Conference Journal, 1900, pp. 367–370.

as in their judgment shall fulfill the spirit of this resolution, and to that end we recommend the continuance of the joint Commission on Federation for another quadrennium, its members to be appointed by the Board of Bishops; and we further recommend that the Commission on Federation take such steps as it may deem wise and necessary to bring about a closer unity and a greater fraternity and coöperation in Christian work between the colored Methodist Churches having an episcopal form of government. Two of these Churches, the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, are now holding General Conference sessions, and we suggest that they and the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church of America, and other Methodist bodies, be invited to join with us in the use of the common Hymnal, the common Order of Worship, and the common Catechism.

"Fourth. *Whereas*, Two Churches of like creed, polity, spirit, and purpose with our own have signified through prominent officials to some of the members of this General Conference a desire that some initial step might be taken at this session looking towards the consolidation of these Churches with the Methodist Episcopal Church; therefore,

"*Resolved*, That the powers of the Commission on Federation be so enlarged as to meet like commissions from other Churches, receive overtures, and report to the General Conference of 1908.

"Fifth. On the subject of general Church federation and coöperation we recommend that we take part in the proposed Conference of representatives of Protestant Churches to be held in New York City in November, 1905, and that the bishops be requested to appoint fifty

representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who shall serve without expense to the Church, and that Frank Mason North be appointed representative of this Church on the Committee of Arrangements." [1]

Just what "two Churches of like creed, polity, spirit, and purpose" are referred to in the fourth paragraph is not stated. Merely the fact that there were two denominations the "prominent officials" of which had expressed a desire for consolidation is mentioned.

The particular force of the expression: "the consolidation of these Churches with the Methodist Episcopal Church" is not perfectly clear, though some might interpret it as implying that those who had spoken meant a mere fusion by coming into the Methodist Episcopal Church as it was at that time. In other words that they would consolidate with it rather than it with the others, and that there would be a combination that would not mean a modification of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, meeting in 1908, passed another act, entitled the "Commission on Federation," which took the place of the Act of 1904, and which appears in the Appendix of the Book of Discipline for 1908 as ¶ 53, under the simple caption of "Federation," as follows:

"1. That the Commission on Federation be continued for another quadrennium, and that its members be appointed by the Board of Bishops as heretofore.

"2. That said Commission is hereby instructed to invite the Evangelical Association, the United Brethren, and such other branches of Methodism as it may believe are sympathetic, to confer through similar commissions

[1] General Conference Journal, 1904.

concerning federation or organic union as in the judgment of the same Churches, respectively, may be most desirable, and to report to the General Conference of 1912.

"3. That we rejoice in the increasing evidences of closer fellowship and prospective union between the various branches of colored Episcopal Methodism in the United States as one of the most striking and hopeful indications of the growth of the spirit of Christian unity, and hereby instruct the Commission on Federation to further these results as far as may be practicable.

"4. That a commission consisting of one bishop, three ministers and three laymen be appointed by the Board of Bishops to serve during the ensuing quadrennium and report to the General Conference of 1912, whose duty it shall be to confer with similar commissions, if such shall be appointed, from the African Methodist Episcopal, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion, and the Colored Methodist Episcopal Churches, concerning such questions as may lead to more harmonious coöperation in extending the kingdom of Christ.

"5. That the bishop who shall be a member of said Commission shall notify the General Conferences of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church of our willingness to confer with similar commissions from these Churches."

This action meditated efforts towards two alternatives, either federation or organic union on the part of white churches of the Methodistic family, and also a separate conference and consideration with colored Episcopal Methodist bodies looking towards coöperation

or union among colored Episcopal Methodists. In other words there were to be two movements, one among white Episcopal Methodists and the other among colored Episcopal Methodists, with the evident intention of effecting two consolidations, one a white and the other a colored Episcopal Methodism.

There were also other actions on the subject of union by the Methodist Episcopal General Conference of 1908. Thus there was one in reference to the Methodist Protestant Church.

Thus that General Conference declared that it "most cordially invites the Methodist Protestant Church to unite with the Methodist Episcopal Church," and it sent a Fraternal Deputation to convey "this invitation together with the most cordial greetings of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

The General Conference also referred to the Commission on Federation the question of closer union of the German work in Texas, as carried on by the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Church South and the Evangelical Association, and the question of the union of Methodist Churches in China was referred to the Federal Council.

Further the Commission on Federation reported concerning its efforts with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and other white branches of Methodism, and at considerable length in regard to consultations with representatives of the colored Episcopal Methodists.

In the 1912 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church its Committee on Federation made a report in which was incorporated the statement drawn up by "the Federation Commissions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church,

South, and the Methodist Protestant Church in joint session in Baltimore, November 10, 1910," which in part is as follows:

"We mutually agree that the Churches represented by us are equally apostolic in faith and purpose and having a common origin, the Methodist Episcopal Church, organized in 1784; that they are joint heirs of the traditions and doctrinal standards of the fathers, and that they have proved their loyalty to the evangelical faith and evangelistic spirit which characterized early Methodists.

"We are mutually agreed that our fathers settled the issues of the past conscientiously for themselves respectively, and separated regretfully, believing that only such action could insure their continued access to the people they were called to serve."

This shows a desire to make mutual concessions in order to strengthen the spirit of common conciliation.

Then, favoring "some form of unification that will further allay hurtful competition," there is the suggestion that the joint commission, "if found practicable," "bring to the General Conferences and people of the respective Churches a plan to provide for such unification through reorganization of the Methodist Churches concerned, as shall insure unity of purpose, administration, evangelistic effort, and all other functions for which our Methodism has stood from the beginning."

Having finished the quotation from the statement of the joint commission, the report of the committee continues:

"We heartily approve the action of our Commission on Federation in proposing the consideration of the question of organic union to the commissioners in joint

session at Baltimore, believing that the membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church would welcome a corporate reunion of the Methodisms of America."

The report also said: "We reaffirm the declaration of the General Conference of 1908, namely: That union of these Churches having a common origin, a common faith, and possessing so much of discipline and polity in common, would in our opinion strengthen the efficiency of the local Churches, secure economy of resources, make for aggressive evangelism and wholesome civic reform, contribute to an era of good feeling among people of all sections, and hasten the kingdom of our Lord. Therefore we most cordially invite the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the Methodist Protestant Church, and all other branches of Methodism to join with the Methodist Episcopal Church in a consecrated and persistent effort to unify the various branches of the Wesley family in America in one great Methodist Church.

"We recommend that a Commission on Federation, constituted as before and appointed by the bishops shall be named, with full power and authority to continue negotiations and to treat with similar commissions from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the Methodist Protestant Church, and any and all other duly appointed commissions from other Churches or branches of Methodism, or with each separately, concerning the commendable purposes of advancing organic union or closer federation. Said Commission to report to the next General Conference."

In the Appendix to the Book of Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church for 1912, the last two paragraphs of this report appear as "¶ 562. Federation,"

with the words "That union of these Churches" down to "the kingdom of our Lord," omitted, and omitted presumably on the supposition that they appeared in the chapter in the Appendix of 1908 which was not the case.

It will be noticed that the object sought was not organic union alone but "organic union or closer federation," the one or the other. That is to say "organic union," if that was practicable but, if that could not be secured, then federation which is described as "closer federation."

If two kindred Churches are not prepared to unite it is nevertheless a good thing to secure and preserve fraternal relations, and in the case of the two bodies in question there has come about freer communication and greater friendliness than was possible some years ago.

That means a gain for Christian brotherhood.

XXVII

FEDERATION IN PRACTICE

NATURALLY one may inquire as to how the plans of federation which have been devised, particularly, since the action of the Cape May Commission in 1876, have worked out in practical operation.

That Commission supposed that every difficulty was settled—that, as its members said, "we have arrived at a settlement of every matter affecting, as we suppose, the principles of a lasting and cordial adjustment," and they had arrived at "a unanimous agreement of complete fraternity."

Difficulties, however, did arise from time to time in subsequent years, and, hence, the repeated resolutions in favor of fraternity and federation and the commissions on federation ordered and appointed from quadrennium to quadrennium.

Notwithstanding all these resolutions, reports, and commissions, still there was not a clear and uniform understanding as to their import and their force, and the question continues to be asked openly or tacitly in some form—What is Federation? What is this kind of Federation? What is it intended to effect? What can it do?

One thing, however, is accepted as quite clear, namely, that this Federation is not unity, but rather, on the contrary, is an avowal of, and a persisting in, separation or independent existence of the respective denomi-

nations. In other words, it may relate but it does not combine.

Further the resolutions and commissions on federation have not completely removed from the Southern mind the idea that the Southern section belongs absolutely and solely to the Church South. So the extreme Southern view still is that the Methodist Episcopal Church had, and has, no right to be in the South, that it should have not entered the South, that it should not now be in the South but that it should go out, and stay out, of the South. This view is not held by all, but in the South there still is a pretty general feeling that federation strictly construed means that the Methodist Episcopal Church has no rightful place in the South, that it should depart therefrom, and that it should go at once.

Persons with such views continue practically, and actually, to assert and reassert that there existed, and that there now exists, a definite geographical line of separation between the proper territory of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, and of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and they reiterate that view, notwithstanding the fact that the Church South has not restricted itself to the Southern side of that supposed line, and that, since its own action of 1866, declaring there was no dividing line, it could not fairly maintain any such claim to a geographical barrier.

When these extremists declare in this day that the Methodist Episcopal Church has no right to be in the South and demand that it should go out and stay out, they fail to present the logical corollary that the Church South should go out and stay out of the North, though

this is required by the logic of their declaration if it is correct, which it is not. The theory that there is a definite geographical line dividing the two denominations has not restrained the Church South from invading the North, and, therefore, it cannot be used legitimately to keep the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America out of the South.

This extreme view voices the sentiment of those in the Southern body who would federate the Methodist Episcopal Church out of the South entirely.

On the other hand, there are in the Church South those who, while they wish their Church had complete possession of the Southern section, nevertheless realize the impracticability of the demand that the Methodist Episcopal Church abandon its extensive interests in the South.

With this failure to change certain old views, the best that can be said for what is called Federation is that it is proposed as a *modus vivendi* by which, under some regulation or understanding, both Churches may work in the same sections of the country.

Here the question arises as to how this theory and provision for proximity of occupation has worked out in practice? If Federation has not harmonized all views, has it been any better in practical operation? Candidly the so-called federation in its working has been very disappointing.

In the first place it has not prevented friction. The Methodist Episcopal Church has gone into parts of the South and the Federation Commissions have not prevented dissatisfaction on the part of the Church South, and the Methodist Episcopal Church has gone into places where the Church South was not in occupation

and operation, and, though there was no interference with the actual working of that Church, its representatives were not satisfied.

The Southern Church has certainly gone into many places where the Methodist Episcopal Church had entered first. It has gone into the city of Washington, which was not in any of the withdrawing Conferences in 1845. It went into Maryland, which adhered to the Methodist Episcopal Church. It went north of the Ohio River, into Illinois, and elsewhere, and established Churches and Annual Conferences, and in the later years has been endeavoring to expand and strengthen its work at great expenditure of money and effort. The attempted federation has not prevented that, and has not tried to prevent it.

Then in places in the South where the Methodist Episcopal Church had gone previously, and where the Church South had no work, the Church South has entered and begun competitive operations.

Into various portions of the South, Northern and Western people have gone and started industries and founded towns and communities where the Church South did not exist, and they have the Church they were accustomed to in their former places of residence, and have, therefore, started the Methodist Episcopal Church, but the Church South has afterwards entered such places though they are about as Northern as if they were north of the Ohio River.

It is not necessary to discuss at this point the rightness of these things, the purpose here being merely to show that the Commissions on Federation have not prevented them or obviated every degree of friction.

So in communities where the Church South was

actively at work the Methodist Episcopal Church has entered because Northern people wanted that Church or because Southern people preferred and desired its ministrations, and many of the most devoted members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the South are Southerners "to the manner born," of the generations, some soldiers of the Civil War or sons and daughters of soldiers who fought on the Southern side.

People in a free land have a right to have the Church they want and that represents their views, and these people in the South have a right to have the Methodist Episcopal Church in their midst if they want it. But here and there in the South where Methodist Episcopalians, or those who desired a Methodist Episcopal Church, have undertaken to assert their right and liberty to establish such a Church which met their own ideas, their right has been denied or questioned, and, sometimes, conflicts of considerable intensity have arisen. These things the federation idea has not controlled either to prevent or harmonize, and one may doubt whether the federation suggestions and the general resolutions or agreements have been carried out equitably or effectively. Certainly they have not produced perfect harmony and completely controlled local action either on the one side or the other.

Too much should not be attempted in the way of control and certain principles must be conceded. Thus, on general principles, the people of a place have a right to say what Church they wish, and the Methodist Episcopal Church has a right to go where it is needed and can do good, and the same may be said for other Churches. A so-called federation that overrides these principles is not likely to make for genuine peace and real progress.

XXVIII

A PLAN FOR UNION

IN 1896, twenty years after the Cape May Commission had met and had drawn up its fraternal agreement, the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church adopted a plan of "Union with other Churches."

This action appeared in the Appendix to the Book of Discipline of this denomination for 1896, as ¶48, under the title: "Union with other Churches."

It reads:

"Whenever any Synod, Conference, Church Society or other body of Christians, agreeing in doctrine with the Methodist Episcopal Church, shall desire to become a component part of said Church, the Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, most nearly or conveniently related, territorially, to such Synod, Conference, Church Society or body, shall have power, with the consent of the bishop presiding, on being satisfied with the agreement of such Synod, Conference, Church Society or body of Christians with the Methodist Episcopal Church in Doctrine and Discipline, to receive such organization in a body into our communion.

"Ministers, so received, shall hold such relations and enjoy such privileges as they would hold or enjoy if admitted individually on their credentials. Members, so received, shall sustain the same relation to the local

Church they would sustain if received individually by certificates.

"Before such reception, however, a properly authenticated register of such ministers and members shall be deposited with the secretary of the Conference considering such reception.

"In all cases of the reception of Churches, satisfactory assurance shall be given the Conference that the property shall be placed in the custody of trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and that the Churches will receive pastors appointed by the authority of the General Conference of said Church."

This was a simple and easy method of receiving individual societies and larger organized bodies into the Methodist Episcopal Church by an Annual Conference, with the concurrence of the presiding bishop, when the society or body agreed with the Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, very much as a pastor and a local church can receive an individual member on proof of doctrinal and disciplinary agreement.

As this measure was reported from the Committee on Missions, it was probably intended primarily for mission fields, but it was phrased for general application.

Under this arrangement, a wide-spread denomination which was Methodistic might be admitted in sections by the Annual Conferences and bishops of the respective localities.

Under this plan the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church, if they had so desired, might have been received into the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1896 or any year since, for the action remains in force and still is printed in the Appendix to the Book of Discipline.

XXIX

INDEPENDENCE AND UNIFICATION IN JAPAN

IN the meantime appeals had been made in a mission field beyond the Pacific for both independence from the Mother Church and also for unification with other Methodist bodies. This was in Japan where the Methodist Episcopal Church began mission work in the year 1873. This was the year of the mission organization. In eleven years after that, namely in 1884, the mission was made an Annual Conference.

Only four years later this Conference in Japan was asking for autonomy or independence. With this request it came to the General Conference of 1888, thus furnishing a striking demonstration of the desire even in foreign mission fields for self-government and independence, a desire which is likely to assert itself more and more as the native Churches become stronger and the national spirit has a greater opportunity to assert itself.

To the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1888 the Reverend Dr. R. S. Maclay presented a memorial from the Japan Conference concerning the organic union of Methodism in Japan, and this was referred to the Committee on Missions.

The Preachers' Meeting of Philadelphia sent a memorial to this General Conference concerning the autonomy of Methodism in Japan which was referred to the same committee.

Also through the New York delegation a memorial

signed by C. W. Green, relating to a basis of union for the different Methodist organizations of Japan, was presented and referred to the Committee on the State of the Church.

Similar memorials were presented through the delegations from other American Conferences and referred to the Committee on Missions.

On the evening of May 30, 1888, the Committee on Missions reported on this subject in the session of the Conference held in Saint Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, in New York City. The discussion not having been concluded at that session it was resumed at the regular place of meeting the next morning, the 31st of May, and at that time was adopted.

In the resolutions then agreed to this body said: "That this General Conference will not interpose any objections to the Japanese Methodists declaring themselves independent of the Methodist Episcopal Church, nor will they object to their uniting themselves with any or all other forms of Methodism that now exist or may exist in Japan, the same to be done according to the general basis of union proposed."

Then followed the plan for carrying out this permission and declaration and provisions for the protection of property and for the care of the American missionaries, which plan, among other items, contained the following:

"That whenever it shall be made evident to the bishop in charge of Japan and to the Board of Managers of the Missionary Society that it is the desire of the Methodists of Japan to be so declared independent, and wherever arrangements satisfactory to said Board of Managers and bishops shall have been made, secur-

ing the real estate in Japan of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the said bishops and Board shall proceed to make all the arrangements necessary to the independence of said Church and its union with the Canada Methodist Missions or any other Methodist Missions in Japan.

"That in case, during the present quadrennial period, the Methodist Church of Japan shall be created in harmony with the spirit and purpose of this action, the General Missionary Committee and Board may continue, under proper regulations, appropriations and payments to the work in Japan, and that our people in this country be encouraged to continue to manifest their interest in the evangelical, educational, publishing, and other work in that country."

Not only was this an authorization of independence for Japan but it was also a recognition of the right of this foreign conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church to make itself independent of the Mother Church. So the General Conference of 1888 said it would "not interpose any objections to the Japanese Methodists declaring themselves independent." Neither would it "object to their uniting themselves with any or all other forms of Methodism . . . in Japan, the same to be done according to the general basis of union proposed."

Though this permission was granted, and the right conceded, the desired independence was not effected under this act. The project was not carried out because the terms were not met in some particular, the prevailing opinion being that it failed because of the non-concurrence of the bishop in charge of the Japan Conference at that time.

At the ensuing General Conference, that of 1892, a memorial on the same subject came from the Japan Conference but no definite action was taken. The movement for independence and union was quiescent until 1904, when in the General Conference of that year there was presented from Japan several memorials in regard to organic union in that country, which memorials were referred to the Committee on Missions.

That Committee reported on the "Unification of Methodism in Japan" as follows:

"On the unification of Methodist bodies in Japan we would respectfully recommend:

"1. That we recognize the desirability of the union of the several Methodist bodies in Japan.

"2. That all papers submitted to this General Conference on the subject of Methodist union be referred to a commission of five, to consist of one bishop, the corresponding secretary of the Missionary Society, and three other members, two of whom shall be laymen, to be appointed by the Board of Bishops.

"3. That said commission shall have full power to confer with similar commissions appointed by other Methodist bodies proposing to enter into the union, and to take final action in the adoption of a plan of unification, provided it shall secure the approval of four out of the five commissioners; and provided, further, that in case a plan of union is agreed upon by our own and one other of the negotiating bodies said plan of union may be adopted without further legislation on the part of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

This was adopted by the General Conference on the twenty-first day of May, 1904, and thus the independ-

ence from the Methodist Episcopal Church of its Japan Mission was provided for, and also its combination with missions of other Methodist bodies in the Japanese Empire.

This separation of the Japan Mission from the Methodist Episcopal Church and its union with the Japanese Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and that of the Methodist Church of Canada in Japan, was consummated in 1907.

The story at length is told in the report of the Commission presented to the Methodist Episcopal General Conference of 1908, as printed in connection with the Journal of that body, where the document covers thirty-three octavo pages.

The narrative recites that:

"As early as 1887 the missionaries and native preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Church of Canada in Japan, agreed upon a tentative plan for the union of the missions of said Churches into a Japanese Methodist Church, which plan was referred to our General Conference in 1888, with several memorials praying for its acceptance."

Referring to the approval given by that General Conference, the report notes that the mission in Japan was "advised to earnestly seek a union with all the bodies of Methodists in Japan, and the bishops and Board of Managers of the Missionary Society were directed to make all arrangements for the 'independence' of the Methodist Church of Japan whenever it should appear to the bishop in charge of the Mission and to the Board of Managers that it was 'the desire of the Methodists in Japan to be so declared independent,'" and then, referring to the fact that the arrange-

ment was not carried out at that time, the report observes:

"Whether this well-laid plan failed through providential interposition or human obstruction may not here be discussed; but the conditions that made for such a movement did not change."

Hence the action of 1904 and the appointment of the Commission which had performed its duty "resulting by God's favor and guidance in the organization of the Methodist Church of Japan."

Then follows a recital of the different and progressive acts that led to the coming together in Tokyo, on the twenty-second day of May, 1907, of the delegates elected by the several Annual Conferences concerned, "for the purpose of organizing the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Japan under the plan fixed by the Basis of Union."

A Discipline having been prepared and approved, the Conference on the first day of June, 1907, being Saturday, proceeded to the election of a bishop, or *Kantoku*, and Y. Honda, the President of the Methodist Episcopal Aoyama College, was chosen to that office, and the next day, Sunday, was duly consecrated, and on Monday took the chair and presided over the General Conference of the new Church composed of those in Japan who had belonged to the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Church of Canada. Thus Methodist Missions in Japan were made independent of their mother Churches in North America and were unified in one Church in this foreign land, and thus came into existence the Nippon Methodist Kyokwai, or in English, the Methodist Church of Japan.

The main legal principle involved in this was that the work was on foreign soil. As in the case of Canada the territory was under a foreign political jurisdiction and the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America did not have quite the same relation to and control of work not within or under the jurisdiction of the United States of America as it had relation to and control of territory for denominational work within the jurisdiction of the United States of America.

This difference of relationship and control was recognized in the matter of the independence of the Canadian Methodist Episcopalians in 1828 when the General Conference by formal action recognized that the Canada Annual Conference was "under a foreign government," and therefore declared: "This General Conference disclaims all right to exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction under such circumstances except by mutual agreement; therefore, Resolved . . . that the compact existing between the Canada Annual Conference and the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States be, and hereby is, dissolved by mutual consent, and that they are at liberty to form themselves into a separate Church establishment," etc.

In other words the work of the Methodist Episcopal Church in a foreign land and under a foreign government has a different status from that in the United States of America and the territory does not have the same relation to the Methodist Episcopal Church as does the territory in the home land which is the United States of America.

So the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America could do in and for its mission work,

within and under some foreign political jurisdiction, what could not be done in, for, or with any territorial section in, or under the government of the United States of America, and the people in the foreign land could do for themselves what similar people in the United States of America, the home land of the Church, could not do in the same way. In the foreign land the ministers and members could become independent and control their work in their own territory, while in the home land, the United States of America, no section could legally become independent and the General Conference could not set off and make independent any territorial section. The Church might allow individuals, whether few or many, to withdraw by letter or otherwise, or the individuals could use their personal liberty but the Church could not set off any territorial part or absolutely abandon a section. In the nation it has been decided that, though individuals may leave the country and cease to be citizens, no state or any number of states in a section can become independent and set up another national government within that territory of the United States of America, and so with the Church there is a similar unity of jurisdiction over the entire United States, and there is no way of limiting the Church of the United States from any part of the United States of America. Individuals or bodies of individuals may go from it but the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America still continues to embrace the entire United States of America though it may not have the allegiance of all the people in this country.

The case of Japan is parallel with the independence of the Conference in Canada, the right to autonomy or

independence in each case being based on the fact that the Conference was on foreign soil and not in the United States of America and not under the government of this country; while the Methodist Episcopal Church was primarily, and strictly speaking, a Church of and in the United States of America.

While, therefore, the Methodist Episcopal Church must keep itself and its territory intact in the United States of America because it is the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, it has a freer hand and a somewhat different control over its missions in foreign lands. As long as these foreign missions remain connected with the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, they must be governed by it, but it may detach the foreign mission and make it independent, or the foreign mission may receive or assert its independence and become a Church of its own country, and so foreign missions, because they are under other national governments, and for various reasons, may become self-governing Churches of their own lands, and it is possible in time that all its foreign missions shall become independent and the Methodist Episcopal Church, the great Mother Church, will be geographically, as well as legally, the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

How soon this may come or exactly why it may come, we need not determine at this moment, but that it may come, and legally could come, is shown by the independence of the Canada Conference in 1828, and the independence of the Japan Mission and its merging with other Methodisms in Japan and the forming of a new Methodist Church of Japan in 1907.

For such separation and independence there may be

inherent reasons and there may be a necessity growing out of peculiar circumstances. Thus the General Conference of 1828, in considering the case of Canada, referred to "the difficulties under which they labor in consequence of their union with a foreign ecclesiastical government." To the Canadians the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America was "a foreign ecclesiastical government." To the Japanese it was the same, and in both cases there were patriotic, as well as prudential reasons, underlying the desire for independence.

In case of war between the two countries, which we only suppose for the purpose of illustration, the members of the foreign Church would be in an awkward situation. If, for example, there was war between the Dominion and the United States, or between Japan and the United States (which may the Lord forbid!), the Canadian members or the Japanese members of "a foreign ecclesiastical government" in the United States of America would be under suspicion of their government as belonging to the Church of the enemy, and would be suspected by their people of sympathy with the enemy, but a self-governing Church within, and of, their own nation would allow a free appeal to patriotism and give it the protective sympathy of the people and of their national government.

Many other reasons might be given by a people in favor of self-government but the present point is that the independence of missions in foreign lands is not only possible but actual.

XXX

THE FEDERAL COUNCIL OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH

FROM the word fraternity to the use of the word federation seems a natural and easy evolution in the dealings between the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Fraternity was readily understood, but the exact force of the word federation was never distinctly set forth or clearly comprehended. As far as the technical and philological interpretation of the term federation was concerned there could hardly be said to have been any real federation. Strictly speaking the word was used in an accommodated sense which greatly weakened the natural and logical definition of the term. Certainly there was no such coming together of the two Churches so that they combined in one government as did the colonies or states in the early period of the United States.

The best that can be said for it is that the two Churches, through committees, called Commissions on Federation, sought to reduce friction and promote harmony in the working of the two denominations at points of contact. In other words it was a sort of lubricating agency to make the machinery run smoothly, but, strictly speaking, it was not a federation and it did not mean a union of the two Churches in any sense.

When the two commissions met together they formed a joint commission but it, like the denominational commission, had little or no power and anything that was proposed by the single commission or the joint commission, had to be referred to the two General Conferences for decision.

After the denominational commissions had been tried for some years there was suggested an additional and ingenious device that whether suspected or not contained vast potentialities, and was calculated, or intended, to ultimate in a comprehensive and powerful controlling body. This suggestion was to create a joint body, to be called The Federal Council.

This was a new name and was a new title for a new development that contemplated a body with greater functions than any that had preceded. The evolution was making progress. Beginning with fraternity, then passing to federation, the forces were to flower in the Federal Council.

The suggestion would seem to have emanated from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for it was adopted by the General Conference of that Church in 1906, and then agreed to in 1908 by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The title of the new organization seemed to grow out of the word federation, but federal was, if anything, a stronger word and idea than a qualified federation. The Federal Council aimed at something far beyond what had been covered by the "Commission on Federation," and the advance in the bolder title was indicative of an advance in power, as well as in the name of the proposed organization.

Federation was now too weak a term and the stronger

word federal was employed. Federation was involved in it, but federal involved so much more that one might imagine that a Federal Council implied that the two denominations were combined in one government of which the Federal Council was its exponent and that the federated denominations were subordinate to the little Federal Council as a confederacy would be subordinate to its Congress. It is more than probable that neither Church suspected this or comprehended the purpose in the minds of the few who were putting together this potential engine of government.

The suggestion was to continue the Commissions on Federation and let them go on as before separately or as a joint commission, but for certain purposes to bring the two commissions together as a Federal Council; so that though composed of the same persons in the joint commission, yet with different functions and powers when acting as the Federal Council.

The action passed by the General Conferences of both Churches, one in 1906 and the other in 1908, instituted "a Federal Council for these two Churches, which, without interfering with the autonomy of the respective Churches and having no legislative functions, shall yet be invested with advisory powers in regard to world-wide missions, Christian education, the evangelization of the unchurched masses, and the charitable and brotherly adjustment of all misunderstandings and conflicts that may arise between the different Churches of Methodism." That was a very ambitious programme. The Federal Council was to have power of an advisory character over nearly everything in the Church—missions, education, and evangelization. So comprehensive is this that it seems that the Boards

and Societies and officers charged with these things would have protested had they realized what was involved.

Then the Council was to bring about an "adjustment of *all* misunderstandings and conflicts that may arise between the *different Churches of Methodism*." It would be quite an undertaking to compose differences between the two denominations having the Federal Council, but to do this for all the denominations of Methodism was establishing a patronizing and pretty pretentious protectorate over the other Methodistic bodies which the other Churches would probably resent.

That was only the beginning, and the evolution was to go on. The two federation commissions met in April, 1910, and recommending that the former action in regard to the Federal Council be amended and this was agreed to by the next General Conferences, the Church South in 1910 and the Methodist Episcopal in 1912.

The changes reveal the inner possibilities of the arrangement and the startling development of power. The advisory power over the general work of the Church remained the same. The words "without interfering with the autonomy of the respective Churches and having no legislative functions" were taken out, which raises the question whether the Federal Council in the future might attempt legislation and interfere with the autonomy of the two Churches. The words "and the charitable and brotherly adjustment of all misunderstandings and conflicts that may arise between the different Churches of Methodism" are eliminated. It was, therefore, no

longer to be merely a "brotherly adjustment," but there is a new grasp at authority and a stronger assertion of power, so that it read: "to have full power to hear and determine finally, without appeal from its decisions, all cases of conflict or misunderstandings between the two branches of Methodism."

That looks like a *coup d'état.* The same astute minds seemed to be developing a plan to unite the two Churches without uniting them legally, and without the denominations knowing what was being done. Suddenly the little Federal Council is clothed with "full power" and when it makes its decisions the parties concerned are to be "without appeal." Lo! it claims to be a power above the General Conference, and the chairman of the Committee on Church Relations in the General Conference of the Church South, in 1914, asserted that the Federal Council was "a Supreme Court beyond the jurisdiction of either General Conference." So the General Conference was to be powerless, unable to hear a protest or to right a wrong. The final power of the General Conference was to be taken from it and transferred to a few men who though bearing the lofty title of Federal Council were really nothing more than a committee of a General Conference or of two General Conferences.

The arrangement was inequitable for it was not fair to put individual and Church rights, including property rights, at the mercy of a few men acting in any such way, and, furthermore, the provision "without appeal" is unconstitutional, for under the Constitution of the Church the right of appeal is guaranteed, and even the humblest individual in the Church cannot be deprived of the right of appeal, and if the individual cannot be

so deprived neither can the local Church with its property and other rights be denied an appeal. The General Conference cannot deny the right, and the General Conference has no right to create a body superior to itself. The right of appeal persists even if "without appeal" has been written into the act, and, what is more, the individual and the local Church may have recourse to the civil courts.

One must assume that the General Conferences did not perceive the comprehensive scope of this arrangement for a Federal Council. Probably very few outside of those who drew up the plan noticed it even in a casual way, and possibly those who framed it did not realize its full force. In all probability the most of the delegates looked upon it in an indefinite way, and presumed it was simply to carry out the fraternal idea and to endeavor to make a "brotherly adjustment" of possible difficulties, but few could have thought it had such a power in relation to the great educational, evangelistic, and missionary work of the two denominations, and, particularly, that it was to be all-powerful in deciding questions of right, so that no aggrieved party could make an appeal.

As a matter of fact, the record of the 1912 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church shows that, if it had any, it was only a very hasty consideration, and that on it there was absolutely no debate. It was presented at the closing period of the Conference when reports were being rushed through with little if any deliberation, and the report was not explained or discussed.

That the method is impracticable is seen in the fact that this Federal Council could not enforce its own de-

crees and its decisions, therefore, would be impotent. It is no wonder in view of all these facts that when the very first case was presented to the Federal Councils the difficulties of operation were so great that the Council reached no decision but agreed to hold no more meetings until the General Conferences of the two denominations, in 1916 and 1918, review the subject.

The probability is that the Federal Council arrangement will have to be recast or totally abandoned, for when the denominations realize the possible dangers of a small body so empowered as to advise about almost everything, and the people perceive that it can dictate as to property and other vested rights, it is more than likely that they will demand that it be divested of its presumptive powers, if indeed they do not absolutely destroy its existence even in name.

XXXI

PENDING SUGGESTIONS OF UNION

CERTAIN suggestions of denominational union are now pending before several bodies, particularly the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church.

The most conspicuous proposition is one that grew out of the deliberations of a joint commission made up of the Commissions on Federation of the above mentioned bodies.

This joint commission met in Baltimore in 1910 and took steps towards the formulation of a suggestion of a method of union.

Later, in 1911, the joint commission issued a tentative outline suggestion that might be considered as a proposed basis for union, though the members of the joint commission did not commit themselves to it, and it is said did not regard it as a plan of union. Indeed the joint commission by formal resolution said it should not be regarded as a plan but merely as indicative of "the result" of the commission's "exploration in search of a basis of union."

Emanating from this joint commission even in this indefinite form the supreme bodies of the respective Churches were at liberty to take it up for consideration, but they were under no obligation to regard it as a formulated and matured plan of union.

The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which convened in May, 1912, did not pass upon it, or even hear it read, and the commissioners of this Church did not regard it as "a plan."

The General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, which met in the same month of the same year favored it as a "tentative plan" but took no definite action on the suggestion looking to reorganization.

Two years later, namely, in May, 1914, the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, took action on the report of the joint commission saying that it "considers the plan outlined in the suggestions . . . as tentative" and "hereby declares itself in favor of the unification . . . in accordance with this general plan of reorganization . . . after it has been accepted by the Methodist Episcopal Church."

Because of this action it would seem that the proposition has been by some attributed to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, though it came from the joint commission, and, though, two years previously it had been agreed to by the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, which was the first body to give its existence formal recognition.

It will also be noted that the acceptance of the General Conference of the Church South of the "tentative" suggestion was not unqualified, but was conditioned upon its acceptance by the Methodist Episcopal Church. So it declared itself "in favor of the unification" "after it had been accepted by the Methodist Episcopal Church" and the agreement, therefore, was not in effect until the plan had been agreed to by the Methodist Episcopal Church.

This so-called "tentative plan" proposes that the territory of the combining Churches, if they do combine, shall be divided into great sections, one of which shall be made up of what has been known as the "South," which sections shall be self-governing, making their own laws and electing their own bishops, each section having its own quadrennial jurisdictional Conference.

Then it is proposed to have over all an indefinite body, or practically undefined General Conference, the time for the meeting of which is undesignated, to have "power over all matters distinctly connectional" which have not been left to the quadrennial conferences, and to confirm those elected bishops, and the "tentative" scheme suggests "that neither the General Conference nor any of the quadrennial conferences be invested with final authority to interpret the constitutionality of its own actions" but nothing is said as to where such interpretative power shall be vested. Presumably it will be somewhere outside of the imaginative General Conference. This ghostly scheme is so crude that it is neither a plan nor the basis of a plan.

The general criticism upon the document will probably be that it is too indefinite as to important particulars, and leaves so many things unstated or unsettled, that the majority of thinkers could not agree to it because no one could certainly tell what would be the outcome or what might be worked into such a skeleton suggestion. Indeed the skeleton stands out so suggestively that it is likely to frighten away many friends of real union.

The one thing that is manifest is that this professed union does propose that the Church shall be divided into practically or actually self-governing geographical

sections, one in the South, and others in the North and West.

Such an arrangement might seem desirable to some in the old South as it would keep that section intact, but the North and West will probably reject such an adjustment because it would sectionalize them in the Church and in the nation, and practically or actually destroy the territorial, as well as the sentimental unity of the ecclesiasticism. Hence it would no longer be truly a nation-wide Church with the same laws everywhere.

So they would be likely to hold that, instead of uniting, it would be dividing the Church, for the result would not really be a unity in a homogeneous Church of the whole country, but a series of sectional bodies connected by a rope of sand and that an invisible one, excepting to persons possessed of most powerful imaginations who might fancy they could see it through the medium of a mythical General Conference meeting no one knows when or where, and, if it does meet, possessing little or no authority.

Many also will object because while the other Churches would be broken into sections, the South would be consolidated and the same "South" would control the South. So while the historic and nation-wide Methodist Episcopal Church, and any other Church, in the arrangement would be shattered and broken up into sectional governments, practically all the supposed or possible advantage would be with what had been the Church South. Thus Methodist Episcopalians already oppose the proposal because it would actually divide the Methodist Episcopal Church, and instead of being a real union would be one of the worst forms of disunion.

In like manner, and for various reasons persons prominent in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, raise objections to the suggested method of union by dissolution.

One leading minister in that Church wants the quadrennial conferences eliminated and the single General Conference for the whole Church perpetuated.

Some, indeed, deny that the Church South wants the "plan" at all; and one of its noted ministers calls the action of its General Conference on this matter a "freak action."

One of the strongest objections to what is supposed generally to be a new tentative suggestion is that it is not new at all. On the contrary it is an old Southern idea that has never been acceptable to the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Its origin can be traced back to a Southern leader in the historic General Conference of 1844. In that Conference Doctor Capers, afterwards Bishop Capers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, offered what was essentially the same proposition. His proposal was to have a Northern body with its own General Conference and a Southern body with its General Conference, making two self-governing bodies with a common relationship in certain practical operations. The General Conference of 1844, however, would not accept the proposition, for it perceived that it meant a radical division making two independent Churches. In some form this idea has been revamped from time to time and now has been renewed in what is called the "tentative plan" of 1911, allowed to go forth from the joint commission and approved in 1912 by the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, and,

in some sense, in 1914 by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Though varying in some details it is merely a modification of the Capers' plan of 1844 which was presented on what proved to be the eve of the withdrawal of certain Southern Annual Conferences. Then the General Conference would not have anything to do with it.

If the General Conference would not agree to it then, it seems improbable that the Methodist Episcopal Church will accept it now when the conditions are less favorable.

The second pending question of union relates particularly to the Methodist Protestant Church. The General Conference of this Church in 1912 after agreeing to the "tentative plan" for consolidation with the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, decided, at the very same session, to form a union with the United Brethren Church.

Whether this meant lack of faith in the so-called "tentative" scheme, or a realization that it was too remote, is not stated, but the very same General Conference did decide to combine with the United Brethren, which is also a "Methodistic" body.

Negotiations have been carried on between these two bodies during the period beginning with 1912, and the matter is now pending. That, or when, the consummation will be reached, is regarded as an uncertainty, but propositions and negotiations between the Methodist Protestants and the United Brethren still proceed.

The third pending question relates to the Evangelical Association and the United Evangelical Church. Efforts are now being made to effect a reunion, and commissions representing both bodies have been en-

gaged in negotiations. The General Conference of the United Evangelical Church has received the proposition with some favor and the General Conference of the Evangelical Association will consider the matter at its next session.

The fourth pending question relates to the Colored Episcopal Methodists. The "tentative plan" previously referred to involves the setting off of the colored ministers and members into a separate "quadrennial jurisdiction." The paper sent out by the joint commission suggests that the colored people have a direct relation to the main body, though with their own "quadrennial conference," but the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, however, recommends "that the colored membership of the various Methodist bodies be formed into an independent organization holding fraternal relations with the reorganized and united Church." This has become the starting point of many queries and requires a separate treatment.

XXXII

PROPOSED UNION OF COLORED METHODISTS

THE people of color who have been under Methodistic influence have from a very early period had an impulse towards independence among themselves as separated from the white people.

Thus in 1813 colored people went off from the Methodist Episcopal Church and founded the Union American Methodist Episcopal Church for people of their race; in 1816 the African Methodist Episcopal Church for people of the negro race was started by colored people who went out from the Methodist Episcopal Church; and in 1817 other colored persons withdrew from the same denomination and organized the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

This was following a common impulse of human nature, namely, the desire for self-government and to have intimate association with their own kind, a desire which has been asserted in some form by people of every race, and no fault is found with the existence of these independent denominations for people of color, and it seems there never was much, if any, criticism upon, or opposition to their organization or continued existence by the Methodist Episcopal Church.

At one time, prior to the Civil War, the colored membership in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, numbered 207,766. This number was diminished during and just after that war until in 1866 only 78,742

colored members were reported. In regard to this loss, Bishop McTyeire of that Church wrote: "The two African Churches, hitherto operating mainly in the North, appropriated a large share of them; another portion went to Northern Methodism, which had also come down to divide the spoils. To the latter went many of the preachers and exhorters, who made the most efficient agents for extending their new organization in the Southern field; and some of them have more than once figured creditably in their General Conferences."[1]

In that year, 1866, with the reduced colored membership, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, began its effort to set off its colored people into an independent Church, which effort was completed in 1870, when they were formed into the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church of America, aided materially by the Church South, bishops of which formally set apart the first bishops of this new colored body.

At the present time there are several independent Churches of colored Episcopal Methodists, besides the colored ministers and members who belong to the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Thus there are the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church of America, which have a very considerable membership, and a small body called the American Methodist Episcopal Church. All these are independent denominations of the colored race.

Recent statistics show that the African Methodist

[1] Bishop McTyeire, "History of Methodism," Nashville, 1888, p. 670.

Episcopal Church has 5,000 ministers, and 620,000 members; the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church has 3,552 ministers, and 568,608 members; the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church has 2,993 ministers, and 236,077 members; the Union American Methodist Episcopal Church has 160 ministers, and 18,500 members.

These figures now, in 1915, are about two years old, and, therefore, a percentage of increase should be estimated.

Again, these do not include the colored people in the Methodist Episcopal Church who number about three hundred thousand more, and they should be added to approximate the aggregate number of colored Episcopal Methodists in the United States.

This would show 1,454,730 independent Episcopal Methodists by the latest available statistics, and, adding twenty per cent. increase in two or three years, namely, 290,946, the total would be 1,745,676. Then, adding say 300,000 colored people in the Methodist Episcopal Church, there would be a body of over two millions (2,045,676) colored Episcopal Methodists of all kinds.

A good many years ago suggestions were made looking towards the union of some of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Churches. Thus as far back as 1864, towards the close of the Civil War, a convention of representatives of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was held in the city of Philadelphia, for the purpose of bringing about the unification of these Churches. In 1868, however, the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church decided

that it could not enter into the consolidation on the basis proposed.

Later there were renewed negotiations for union between the two largest bodies of Episcopal Methodists, namely, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. These negotiations were carried on for a considerable period.

For a time the prospects for their union seemed promising, but organic unity never was consummated, and the effort which had been inaugurated years before ceased, at least for the time being. Thus, though efforts for union have continued during fifty-one years, still these two important Churches have not yet united.

Though organic unity did not succeed at that time, nevertheless the colored Episcopal Methodists were drawing nearer.

As a proof that they were coming closer together, we have the fact that the bishops of the three larger bodies joined together and formed what they called "The Federated Council of the Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church" to deal with mutual questions that did not require legislation or other action by the General Conferences.

This "Federated Council" held its first meeting in Washington, District of Columbia, February 12–17, 1908, and its second meeting, February 9–12, 1911, in Mobile, Alabama.

The First Council considered and acted upon such questions as a common hymnal, one Catechism for the three denominations, a uniform Liturgy, and a uniform public service for the Sabbath day. On all these the

Federated Council made favorable recommendations for action by the three General Conferences. The Council also approved of a plan of mutual transfer between the three Churches, and also agreed upon a plan for the protection of the three denominations from the passage of improper preachers from one body to another. While this did not go to the point of organic union of the three colored denominations, it did mean a practical federation of the potent leaders of the three Churches in the banding together of their bishops in a Council for practical purposes.

The Second Federated Council reaffirmed the acts of the First Council, agreed "to meet biennially hereafter," and "that the quadrennial addresses of the respected federated bodies be published in the chief organ of each denomination represented."

To the Second Federated Council came a paper in favor of organic union between the three Churches which was signed by sixteen of the General Officers of these denominations including editors, secretaries, and presidents of colleges.

The petition approved of the "joint council for the purpose of encouraging the spirit of federation among the Churches of these (three) Methodist bodies," which "has resulted in much good in bringing about more harmonious relationship between them," and "will accentuate the movement of still closer ties, and bring us nearer the realization of the organic union."

Then the paper proceeded:

"*Whereas*, We believe that organic union of these bodies of Methodism will be for the best interest of the common cause we represent in the development of

a race, the uplift of humanity, and the establishment of God's kingdom on earth; and

"*Whereas*, We believe that organic union will come only as the result of some definite act and specific declaration on the part of the fathers of the Church, backed up and supported by those who have been placed in position of trust and responsibility in the management of the various affairs of business connected with the Churches here represented; and

"*Whereas*, We believe the time is now ripe for such definite act and such specific declaration; therefore be it

"*Resolved*, first, That the bishops now assembled be asked to make public and declare themselves on the question of organic union, and that such declaration be published throughout the Church, through all the organs of the several Churches here represented.

"*Resolved*, second, That as an evidence of good faith and for the purpose of bringing this question more directly before the Church tribunals, and through them to the body of the people, there be created here and now a special commission to be styled as a Commission on Organic Union.

"*Resolved*, third, That said Commission shall consist of the bishops of the three Churches, the General Officers, nine ministers (three from each) and six laymen (two from each Church).

"*Resolved*, fourth, That said Commission be required to meet and formulate plans and propositions as to the basis of Organic Union; said plans and propositions to be submitted to the General Conference of the respective Churches in their next regular sessions."

They also asked that the General Officers and the

presidents of their schools be made regular members of the General Federated Council.

Professor Hawkins "stated that it was the consensus of opinion of the General Officers that there should be organic union between the three Churches represented," and the Reverend J. F. McDonald, editor of the *Western Christian Recorder*, "thought the petition ought to be given an immediate consideration" and that "the bishops ought to declare themselves on the subject."

Bishop Walters "expressed himself as being in favor of organic union, but (this) did not seem to be the Lord's time for it. He gave the history of the development of the subject, and said he was not as enthusiastic as he had been heretofore, yet, if it was to be voted upon, he would vote for it."

Bishop Smith said he was "in favor of organic union," but thought they "ought to make haste slowly," and "further stated that he thought a copy of the petition should be placed in the hands of each bishop for careful study; for, if the matter was pressed to a vote, we might have, instead of three churches, six."

The record shows that, "indeed, all the bishops expressed themselves in favor of the union, but thought in order to make it permanent they should make haste slowly."

The result was that, on motion of Bishop Phillips, the petition was referred to the Committee on Resolutions.

Later the Federated Council adopted the following:

"*Resolved*, That we here determine to use our best efforts as bishops representing these three great Negro bodies of Methodists, to use every possible means to encourage the spirit of unity and fraternity among the

entire membership, and to make these bodies as far as possible a powerful means of promoting the Redeemer's kingdom on earth:

"*Resolved*, That this Federation of Bishops use its best efforts to promote the establishment of a body in our Fatherland to be known as the 'United Episcopal Methodist Church in Africa'; and, *Whereas*, the federation of these Methodist bodies means more than mere agreement; and *Whereas*, it means coöperation and fortification; therefore be it:

"*Resolved*, That it is agreed and covenanted that we, the Federated Board of Bishops, will not practice nor countenance the practice of encouraging or fostering internal dissensions, ruptures or rebellion in the local Churches or the conferences of one another's connection."

In the matter of a United Church in Africa, it was agreed to bring the proposition before the next session of their several General Conferences, "and urge the appointment of commissioners from each body who shall constitute a United Commission, whose duties it shall be to arrange a plan for the promotion of this important object."

In the meantime a movement was inaugurated within the Methodist Episcopal Church to promote the unification of colored Methodists who had an episcopal form of government.

In the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church held in 1904 it ordered a Commission on Federation with two purposes, one looking towards federation or union among white Methodists, and the other looking towards unity or federation among colored Methodists. The act of 1904 reiterated points in

the action of 1900, but enlarged the powers of the Commission, so that not only was it to meet like commissions, particularly from certain indicated Churches and to take action "looking towards the consolidation of those Churches with the Methodist Episcopal Church," but also, and specifically, it was ordered "that the Commission on Federation take such steps as it may deem wise and necessary to bring about a closer unity between the Colored Methodist Churches having an episcopal form of government." This plainly looked towards a unification of such Methodistic colored people.

The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held in 1908, went still further. The Commission during the previous quadrennium had addressed a letter to the senior bishop of each of the "various Colored Methodist Episcopal Churches," and in it said: "We greatly rejoice in the intellectual, moral, and religious progress of the colored race, and believe that such progress would be promoted by the increase of fraternity between the various branches of Episcopal Methodism among colored people." The letter also suggested the appointment of commissions by the several bodies, and observed that "the meeting of the authorized representatives of almost two millions of colored Church members for fraternal and prayerful consultation about the interests of their race would of itself be a very impressive lesson to all the Churches and to the whole country."

The report also stated that "The communication was kindly received and in February last twenty-six of the twenty-eight bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church,

met in Washington City, and agreed to recommend to their respective bodies the adoption of a common hymnal, a common order of service, and a common catechism, and that no one should be received from one of these Churches by another unless he possessed an indorsement as to his moral character by the Church which he desired to leave."

The General Conference further adopted the following: "That we rejoice in the increasing evidences of closer fellowship and prospective union between the various branches of Colored Episcopal Methodism in the United States as one of the most striking and hopeful indications of the growth of the spirit of Christian Unity, and hereby instruct the Commission on Federation to further these results as far as practicable."

In addition a separate commission was ordered in relation to colored Episcopal Methodists. The action reads: "That a Commission, consisting of one bishop, three ministers, and three laymen, be appointed by the Board of Bishops to serve during the ensuing quadrennium and report to the General Conference of 1912; whose duty it shall be to confer with similar commissions, if such shall be appointed, from the African Methodist Episcopal, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion, and the Colored Methodist Episcopal Churches, concerning such questions as may lead to more harmonious coöperation in extending the kingdom of Christ," and the Bishop on the Commission was to notify the several General Conferences of the willingness of the Commission "to confer with similar Commissions from these Churches."

This Commission was entitled the "Commission on the Federation of Colored Churches."

So the Methodist Episcopal Church had now two commissions, one to confer with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and other white Churches, and a second to confer with colored bodies of the Methodist Episcopal class, showing a greater specialization by giving to a different commission the special work of bringing about federation, coöperation, and unity of the Colored Episcopal Methodisms.

The 1912 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church continued the two commissions with their separate functions, the one for white people and the other for the colored, but instead of one bishop on the "Commission on Federation of Colored Churches," enlarged the commission by increasing the number to three bishops.

In this General Conference the report which was adopted said: "It is plainly our duty to assist in every practical way in allaying the competition among the colored Methodist Churches, and thus increase the efficiency of Methodism's combined service to the Negro race," and the Conference ordered the Commission, "whose duty it shall be to confer with similar commissions, if such shall be appointed, from the African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, and the Colored Methodist Episcopal Churches, concerning such questions as may lead to more harmonious coöperation in extending the kingdom of Christ."

This Methodist Episcopal Commission of 1912 met in the city of Chattanooga, Tennessee, on the 8th of January, 1915, and, after studying the acts of the General Conferences bearing upon the Commission from the time it was first considered, formulated a statement as

to their authority and specified what they were empowered to do as follows:

"Whereas, the General Conference of 1904 directed 'that the (then) Commission on Federation take such steps as it may deem wise and necessary to bring about a closer unity between the Colored Methodist Churches having an episcopal form of government;' the General Conference in 1908 spoke of 'the prospective union between the various branches of Colored Episcopal Methodism,' and instructed 'the Commission to further these results,' and made a commission 'to confer with similar commissions' of the Churches as aforestated and for the purposes named; and the 1912 General Conference reaffirmed the preceding acts and said: 'It is plainly our duty to assist in every practical way in allaying the competition among the Colored Methodist Churches and thus increase the efficiency of Methodism's combined service to the Negro race,' and the same General Conference ordered a 'Commission on the Federation of Colored Churches' 'whose duty it shall be to confer with similar commissions, if such shall be appointed, from the African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, and the Colored Methodist Episcopal Churches, concerning such questions as may lead to more harmonious coöperation in extending the kingdom of Christ;'

"Therefore, be it

"*Resolved*, 1. That it is the duty of this 'Commission on Federation of Colored Churches,' first, to promote the union of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Churches; second, to further their federation where they are not prepared for organic unity; and, third, to promote fraternity and Christian coöperation.

"*Resolved*, 2. That it is the further duty of this commission to consider such questions as vitally concern our own colored ministry and membership in their relationship to the larger question of the organic union of Methodism.

"*Resolved*, 3. That in connection with these duties, we recognize the propriety of seeking to avoid unnecessary duplications of Churches and educational institutions; to prevent the passing from one denomination to another of improper ministers and members; and to reach wise understandings for the practical welfare and enlarged efficiency of the said Churches, including the matter of better preparation for and in the ministry.

"*Resolved*, 4. That a committee be appointed to open correspondence with similar commissions of the said Colored Churches or, where there are no such commissions, with the Churches themselves, or with representative men of the said Churches, in order to ascertain what these Churches are willing to do in the matter of federation, union, and practical coöperation."

A committee conveyed or communicated this action to the representatives of the three bodies mentioned and invited them to be present at and to participate in a joint meeting with the commission from the Methodist Episcopal Church. Favorable responses were received and commissioners from the three Churches were selected, and the four commissions met in joint session on Wednesday, the 30th of June, 1915, in the city of Cincinnati, Ohio.

Three meetings of the joint commission and meetings of the several church commissions met that day and many matters were canvassed. The deliberations covered three general topics, namely, Coöperation,

Federation, and Organic Unity, and the joint commission planned coöperation in various movements and agreed to federated action in various particulars by agreeing to do or not to do certain specified things. On the question of organic union there was a general acceptance of the principle, and some of the commissioners were individually and emphatically in favor of a combined Colored Episcopal Methodism in one great Church. However it was deemed prudent at that moment not to be very definite or specific, so the final formulation expressed the idea in general terms.

The sessions of this joint commission were harmonious and manifested a fraternal spirit, and the perpetuity of the body was ensured by a voted agreement to reconvene on call.

Out of this first joint commission representing the colored people in four Methodist Episcopal Churches something important in the nature of organic unity or close federation may develop.

This movement, inaugurated by authority from the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the participation of its colored representatives in this joint commission for the purposes stated has started questions as to the full meaning and intended or probable outcome of the movement. Thus it has started questions as to the present and future relations of the colored people in the Methodist Episcopal Church to the colored Episcopal Methodists outside that Church and organized in independent denominations. Again it is asked whether the effort to bring about organic unity between Colored Methodist Episcopal Churches means a united Colored Episcopal Methodism which involves in it the colored ministry and membership of the Method-

ist Episcopal Church, or a changed adjustment of the relation of its present colored membership to the Methodist Episcopal Church itself.

But a similar question is forced upon the attention by the "tentative" proposition, or "suggestion," sent out from the joint commission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church in May, 1911, and approved in May, 1912, by the Methodist Protestant General Conference, and qualifiedly approved in May, 1914, by the General Conference of the Methodits Episcopal Church, South, which latter approval has caused some to consider it as a proposition for union emanating from the Church South.

Though it was declared by the joint commission to be not a "plan" but simply a tentative suggestion "to be regarded simply as illustrative of the present status of (the Commission's) deliberations," nevertheless, by many, the outline has been seriously taken as suggesting what is called unification by "reörganization," and the division of the country into sectional Quadrennial Conferences, with the colored Episcopal Methodists in a quadrennial conference by themselves.

One conspicuous proposition in that tentative document is that which meditates the setting off of the colored people in a body by themselves, and that all colored Episcopal Methodists be united in one body. The report in question suggested that the colored people in any of the three bodies represented in the commission "and such organizations of colored Methodists as may enter into agreement with them may be constituted and reörganized as one of the Quadrennial or Jurisdictional Conferences of the proposed reörgani-

zation," but the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1914, voted a recommendation that the colored people "be formed into an independent organization, holding fraternal relations with the reörganized and united Church."

That the colored people shall not be organically connected with it, or with it in union with the Methodist Episcopal Church, but that they shall be organically independent, is understood to be the attitude of the Church South, and it is asserted that the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, makes as one of its conditions of possible union with the Methodist Episcopal Church such an elimination of the colored people now in connection with the latter Church.

That raises the question as to what may be done with the colored persons in the Methodist Episcopal Church, or what they may do with themselves.

If union between the great Methodist Episcopal Churches is desirable and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, will not unite with the Methodist Episcopal Church, as long as the latter has colored ministers and members and colored delegates in its General Conferences, and that view is corroborated by the fact that the Church South practically has no colored members and absolutely no colored delegates in its General Conferences, it is plain that there will be no union at the present time and as long as that attitude is persisted in, unless the colored people make some other arrangement or some other arrangement is made for them, and such an arrangement as will separate them from, or make them independent of, the white people in this Church.

Some, however, not impressed by the necessity of

making the colored people independent in order to effect a union between two white Methodist Episcopal Churches, might not regard this as a sufficient reason, and yet they might favor the separation on other grounds.

It is evident that there may be other reasons for such a separation, for the present question of union between two white Churches, or mainly white, was not before the Church when in the early period colored ministers and people withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church and organized independent denominations for people of color. So some may see other reasons at the present time.

With some the mere desire for self-government might be a sufficient motive for independence. With others there might be a conviction that to be thrown upon their own resources might be for the good of the people made independent and that there would be a more rapid and a more symmetrical development because they would have to direct their own affairs. Such reasons might be regarded by many as quite enough to induce them to favor independence, while different reasons might influence others.

The proposition to which reference has been made would particularly affect the colored people in the Methodist Episcopal Church, of whom there are said to be about 300,000.

It would imply their independence, or their separation from the Methodist Episcopal Church and then their combination with one or more of the existing colored denominations composed of Episcopal Methodists.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, no longer

has this problem within itself, for some forty-five years ago its colored membership became independent, and formed the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. So the question is one for the Methodist Episcopal Church and its colored ministers and members.

They will have to study and determine the desirability and feasibility of such a separation and some form of independence, and act if it is found desirable and feasible.

The question may be: Will the Methodist Episcopal Church set off the colored people, or will the colored people seek a voluntary withdrawal, or will there be a mutual and cordial agreement?

What the Church would like to do, or what the colored people would like to do cannot be definitely stated at this moment, though possibly some recent events may contain a partial revelation.

In the first place, a few years ago the Reverend Bishop Isaiah B. Scott, the Methodist Episcopal Colored Missionary Bishop in Africa, issued a circular address proposing that the colored people in the Methodist Episcopal Church become an independent Methodist Episcopal Church for the people of their own color.

Then a convention of colored ministers and laymen of the Methodist Episcopal Church met in the month of October, 1914, in the city of Nashville, Tennessee, considered this very question of segregation, and voted their willingness to be set off as one of the suggested quadrennial jurisdictions. The resolution the convention adopted read as follows: "With the light now before us, we approve the plan of the Federation Commission for the reorganization of Methodism providing for jurisdictional or quadrennial conferences with iden-

tical powers and privileges, one of which is to be composed of the affiliated colored membership."

Of course this convention was not constituted by ecclesiastical authority but came together voluntarily on call and was self-controlled, and yet it was composed of representative persons, and their judgment may be regarded as fairly representative of the feeling of many of their people at that time.

However, as there has been no very general expression of opinion given in an authoritative manner, it is not perfectly clear what all wish or what the majority will desire.

There are, nevertheless, race aspirations and desires for independence and self-government among all peoples which must be taken into account. How these natural desires will assert themselves cannot now be definitely predicted. It is further complicated by the fact that in the solution both races have an interest and may have something to say.

In the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, there are practically no colored people, but in the Methodist Episcopal Church a minority of the membership is colored and this colored minority has its own local churches and ministers and its own Annual Conferences and its own District Superintendents, or Presiding Elders, of its own race, so that, if it was desired, a separate body could easily be constituted.

To this minority the great majority of the Church has always been kind and helpful, and that always has been recognized, but it may be that race ambitions and the natural demand for self-control may impel the colored minority to prefer independence which will permit them to elect bishops, as well as other church

officers from their own race, and enable them to manage their church affairs in their own way.

Then there may be a growing conviction on the part of the colored people that their own development would be more rapid if they had the responsibility of governing themselves, and of planning and prosecuting the work among and for their own people.

The total colored membership in the Methodist Episcopal Church numbers about 300,000 while the entire membership of the denomination is not far from four millions.

The entire colored population of the United States is estimated as about ten millions, so that it is plain that the Methodist Episcopal Church has not been getting, or caring for all, or for any very large proportion, of the colored people of the country.

What effect a consideration of these facts will have cannot be positively predicted. Then there is a further fact of some importance, namely, that the great majority of the colored Methodists are in denominations by themselves. There are more than a million and a half of communicants in the independent Colored Methodist Churches, as compared with less than one-third of a million of colored communicants in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Thus there is only a small minority, compared with the aggregate mass, in the Methodist Episcopal Church with its millions of white members.

A philosophic historian would infer from these facts that the colored people as a whole prefer to be ecclesiastically by themselves in their own independent Churches, and that it would not be improbable that the colored people now in the Methodist Episcopal Church

would sooner or later prefer to be in an independent Church controlled by their own race.

If they did withdraw, it is probable that the colored people in the Methodist Episcopal Church would prefer not to fuse at first with other colored Episcopal Methodists, but to organize themselves into an independent colored Church, elect their own bishops and other general officers, and later consider the question of combining with other colored bodies. At least that has been the expressed opinion of some of their leaders, who say that otherwise they would be at a disadvantage in dealing with independent organizations that have been compacted by years of experience and self-control.

If the colored Methodist Episcopalians withdrew and became an independent body, it is probable that the Methodist Episcopal Church would make a satisfactory adjustment as to property, and would continue to appropriate missionary money for the aid of the colored people, as it now gives missionary money to the independent Church of Japan, and that it would continue to appropriate to the educational work among the people of color. Doubtless such matters might be adjusted to mutual satisfaction if the independence was agreed upon.

If all the colored Episcopal Methodists, including those in the Methodist Episcopal Church, were to combine they would make a great Church of about two millions or more communicants, not counting adherents and Sunday-school scholars.

This would make an impressive and influential body and when two millions or two millions and a half uttered their voice for themselves, or for any righteous cause it would be heard and heeded, as would not be the case with the cry of small or fragmentary bodies.

Many colored people may conclude that in view of race questions, which observing persons believe are impending, it will be well to secure the solidarity and power given by unified Colored Episcopal Methodism in an organization which would be as large as, or possibly larger than, the present Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

These are not an advocate's theories but the historian's perception of facts and possibilities. From these facts inferences may be drawn that point to possibilities and even probabilities, but it would take prophetic vision to perceive the final outcome.

The large majority of colored Methodists have yielded to the natural impulse to be independent, and it is intimated that some of the independents pride themselves on their independence so that they twit the colored people in the Methodist Episcopal Church for being under white domination, all of which raises questions and causes reflection.

It is expected that what is right and best will be carefully considered by the colored people and their best friends of the white race.

XXXIII

GERMAN-AMERICAN METHODISM

THE study of American Methodism would not be complete without a mention of certain Methodistic Churches which at first appealed particularly to people who spoke the German tongue.

Many Germans for religious liberty as well as political freedom came to the English Colonies long before the war for Independence and settled chiefly in eastern and central Pennsylvania, and their descendants in that state are to this day spoken of as Pennsylvania Germans, and there they have to a great extent preserved their ancient mother tongue, though now modified considerably by contact with the English language, yet still a dialect of the German.

Very many of the original immigrants were from the Rhenish Palatinate and spoke the German of that region, and the language of the Pennsylvania Germans can be understood at the present time by the people of Southern Germany in the Upper Rhine country.

From Pennsylvania as a center these German people spread in various directions, but the population was more dense in certain sections of Pennsylvania than elsewhere.

To provide for the religious needs of these Germanic communities ministers were from time to time sent from Germany.

Among those who were sent for to perform this work

was a young German Reformed minister named Philip William Otterbein who was born in 1726, in Dillenberg, in the Duchy of Nassau, Germany. His father was a minister of the German Reformed Church and also the rector of the Latin school at Dillenberg.

As might be expected in view of such environments and in view of his calling, Philip William Otterbein was very thoroughly educated. His certificate of ordination speaks of him as "the reverend and very learned young man Philip William Otterbein," and the testimonial drawn up when he was recommended for the work in America refers to him as "the truly reverend and very learned Mr. Philip William Otterbein."

In 1752, when a young man of twenty-six, he emigrated from Germany and, coming to America, had his first pastoral charge in this country in the city of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. In Germany Mr. Otterbein had come under pietistic influences, and, while in Lancaster, he was impressed with the necessity of securing a personal spiritual experience much profounder and more pervading than was commonly possessed or taught in his denomination. He, therefore, earnestly sought a more thorough work of divine grace and entered into a higher religious life and this he regarded as his first real change of heart.

That he had experienced some change was seen in the changed style of his preaching, for though it had been quite direct, his ministry now assumed a profoundly spiritual character and he preached with an unction such as neither he nor his people had before realized, and, in addition, he began to hold evangelistic services, and instituted special prayer and experience meetings and even held religious services in the open air.

After six years in the Lancaster pastorate, he transferred his labors to Tulpehocken, Pennsylvania, where he continued his highly spiritual ministry. Here he exhorted the people to flee from the wrath to come, using methods and language suggestive of those employed by John Wesley whose work had been spreading throughout Great Britain. How much of Wesley's influence had extended to the American colonies at that time is not known though it is possible that individuals who had heard him or his co-workers had come to America, but, as far as now known, there was not a Wesleyan society or a single pronounced follower of Wesley in all America.

Mr. Otterbein's "new measures," however, brought upon him severe criticism.

From 1760 to 1765 Otterbein was pastor in Frederick City, Maryland, and from 1765 to 1770 he was pastor at York, Pennsylvania. Then he visited Germany, and on his return he served as pastor in York from 1771 to 1774.

All this time Mr. Otterbein had been pursuing his peculiar course and diffusing his ideas of the spiritual life. It has been said that he was led into the light of a new life by the Reverend Martin Boehm, a zealous Mennonite preacher of Pennsylvania. However that may have been the two ministers became closely related. It is told that Mr. Otterbein attended a religious meeting held in a barn in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where Mr. Boehm delivered a discourse, and at the close of the sermon before Mr. Boehm had taken his seat, Mr. Otterbein arose and embraced him, exclaiming: "We be brethren!" and from that time they were brethren united in Christ.

At first they worked separately travelling extensively, preaching here and there, organizing societies, and gathering co-workers, but later they became co-laborers and acted conjointly. As the societies became more numerous a system of regular ministerial supply was devised to maintain the stated services, and the preachers interested in the developing movement met and conferred together.

In the meantime Mr. Otterbein was called to a pastorate in the city of Baltimore. There had been a split in the German Reformed Church in that city and a new Church had been formed in 1770, and the new organization wanted Mr. Otterbein to be its pastor. Mr. Francis Asbury, the leader of the Wesleyan movement in America, was at that time in Baltimore, and on this matter was in consultation with the Reverend Mr. Schwope of the Reformed Church. Asbury wanted Otterbein to come to Baltimore, and sustained the request of the congregation by writing a personal letter to Mr. Otterbein urging him to accept the invitation.

Otterbein in 1774 came to the new Church and it became a new kind of a Church, which, instead of calling itself a German Reformed Church, called itself "The Evangelical Reformed Church."

It was in May, 1774, the very year that Otterbein came to Baltimore, that German-speaking ministers with evangelical spirits and coöperating in evangelistic work began to hold meetings and called themselves "The United Ministers." Somewhere between 1775 and 1780 the Mennonites excluded from their fellowship their preacher, the Reverend Martin Boehm, because they did not approve of his theological teachings, and, for similar reasons, excluded his followers.

This helped towards a new organization among the Germans.

Before that, however, there occurred another ecclesiastical development. The Wesleyan societies had spread throughout the colonies and had become an important factor in the new Republic. Their organization, however, was not complete. It was still directly related to Wesley in England and needed a readaptation to new conditions in America. So, after the independence of the United States of America, Wesley determined upon the reorganization of the Wesleyan body in this country.

The plan for the reorganization was brought by the Reverend Thomas Coke, D. C. L., of Oxford University, England, who, a regularly ordained presbyter of the Church of England, but a minister under Mr. Wesley, and a member of his Conference, had been set apart by Wesley for the headship of the new American organization, to act in conjunction with Francis Asbury.

Philadelphia, the chief city in the colonies and later in the new nation, had been the early Methodistic center, but the movements of the British forces and the occupation of Philadelphia by a British army had forced the work and the workers farther southward and Baltimore became a convenient point for general gatherings. To Baltimore, therefore, the American Wesleyan preachers came to consider Wesley's plan and his proposals for his people in the new land, and the American Conference met in the Lovely Lane Chapel in that city, on Christmas eve, 1784, and, continuing through the Christmas season, it has been called the "Christmas Conference."

Wesley's communication was read, and, as Freeborn

Garrettson, who was present, said: "We acceded to the method proposed by Mr. Wesley," and, as Asbury recorded, "It was agreed to form ourselves into an Episcopal Church, and to have superintendents, elders, and deacons," and for distinction they called it "The Methodist Episcopal Church." Asbury also notes that, "When the Conference was seated, Doctor Coke and myself were unanimously elected to the superintendency of the Church."

The Wesleyan idea of the episcopate was that the episcopacy was a superintendency and that a bishop was an ecclesiastical superintendent, and, hence, bishop and superintendent were often used interchangeably, but bishop became the title of the officer while superintendency characterized the nature of the service he rendered.

Doctor Coke, having been set apart in England, needed, at this time, no consecration, but Francis Asbury, who had been the acting and real head of Wesleyanism in America, having been elected superintendent or bishop, to act conjointly with Bishop Coke, needed the formal service inducting him into his high office.

Doctor Coke with others were sufficient for this service but Asbury requested his friend the Reverend Philip William Otterbein to participate in the consecration service. So Otterbein joined with Bishop Coke and the new elders, Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, just arrived from England, in the formal service setting apart Francis Asbury for his high office in the new American Church, and previously assisted in his ordination as elder.

Bishop Coke and the others represented the British

line of clerical succession, while Otterbein represented that of the Reformed Church of Continental Europe, so that, if there was any grace coming from a succession, Asbury received a double stream from the two sources, the Anglican and the Reformed Churches.

The incidents mentioned show that the Reverend Mr. Otterbein was closely related to Bishop Asbury and the Methodist Episcopal Church. He had a strong sympathy with its polity, its doctrines, and its practical methods of work, which he incorporated in his own religious operations. So it happened that, working on similar lines, Asbury devoted himself to Americans generally, while Otterbein, being a German, devoted himself particularly to the German-speaking people who were found here and there throughout the land.

Pursuing methods of operation similar to those employed by Asbury and other ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the work of Otterbein and Boehm resulted, in what was, in many respects, a duplicate of the Methodist Episcopal Church but for the Germans.

One rule of Otterbein's Church in Baltimore, before the close of the eighteenth century, read: "No preacher can stay among us who will not to the best of his ability care for the various Churches in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, which Churches, under the superintendence of William Otterbein, stand in fraternal unity with us."

The Reverend Daniel Berger, D. D., in his history,[1] says that the Churches referred to "were such societies as were formed of men and women converted under the preaching of Mr. Otterbein at various points visited by

[1] "History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ," Dayton, Ohio, 1897, p. 101.

him from time to time, and under the preaching of Mr. Boehm," and others.

The first formal Conference of the preachers associated with Otterbein and Boehm was held in 1789, in Otterbein's parsonage in Baltimore, when seven ministers were reported present, and the same number absent, making fourteen who were understood to be affiliated or acting together. Otterbein and Boehm were among those present. The former was now about sixty-three years of age and the latter was one year older. This meeting adopted an instrument made up of the "Disciplinary Rules" and "The Doctrine of the United Brethren in Christ." A second formal Conference was held in 1791, about eight miles from York, Pennsylvania, when Otterbein and Boehm and seven others were present and thirteen were absent.

After this no Conference was held until 1800. This Conference, convened by Otterbein in conjunction with Boehm, and held on the 25th and 26th of September, 1800, at the house of a Peter Kemp, a little more than two miles west of Frederick City, Maryland, was historic.

Fourteen preachers were present and eighteen were absent, and among those in attendance were Otterbein, Martin Boehm, and the latter's son, Henry Boehm.

Here it would seem the work of the scattered preachers and societies was compacted as a distinct body. The title of the organization was definitely decided. In the prefatory remark to the Minutes appears the title, "The United Brotherhood in Christ Jesus," and a briefer form, used previously, "the United," an abbreviated appellation, meaning "The Unified." The people had been called "United Brethren," but now, to avoid confusion with the Moravian "United Breth-

ren," or "*Unitas Fratrum*," the Conference formally adopted the title "United Brethren in Christ," or "The Church of the United Brethren in Christ." [1]

This Conference of 1800 also elected the Reverend Philip William Otterbein and the Reverend Martin Boehm superintendents or bishops. Doctor Harbaugh, the Reformed Church historian, disputes this and says that no bishop was elected by the United Brethren Church until 1813, the year when Otterbein died. Doctor Harbaugh bases his denial also on the assertion that Mr. Otterbein never left the German Reformed Church, but, even if that were true, it might be held that he could have had a sort of double relationship. Indeed it is declared that though he did not formally withdraw from the German Reformed Church, his active relationship for years was very slight. So John Wesley never formally withdrew from the Church of England, yet he was the head of an independent ecclesiasticism over which the Church of England never had any control and did not control or direct him in its management. It will also be remembered that Otterbein's Church in Baltimore had named itself "The Evangelical Reformed Church."

The United Brethren historians maintain that both Otterbein and Boehm were elected superintendents or bishops in 1800 and the Reverend Henry Boehm, who was present, states that they were so elected. Thus he says: "They elected bishops for the first time. William Otterbein and Martin Boehm (my father) were unanimously chosen." [2]

[1] Daniel Berger, D. D., "History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ," 1897, pp. 163–165.

[2] "Henry Boehm's Reminiscences," pp. 55, 56.

Attention is also called to a record in the Conference of 1802, only two years later, "That in case one of our superintendents—W. Otterbein and Martin Boehm—should die, another one in his place shall always be appointed."

The Church of the United Brethren in Christ had a polity that was episcopal, while in doctrine it was Arminian. It adopted most of the prudential arrangements of Methodism and had in practical operation the same methods in polity. It had an appointive power and an itinerant ministerial system. It had Annual Conferences and a Quadrennial General Conference, and in the organization of the local church it was quite similar to the local charges in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The great difference was that it devoted itself to work in German and among Germans while the other Church used the English language and operated among English-speaking people, and because of this these United Brethren were frequently called German Methodists.

In the early days, as might be inferred from the personal friendship between Asbury and Otterbein, and also with Martin Boehm, the relationship between the United Brethren in Christ and the Methodist Episcopal Church was very close, and it was possible for ministers and members of one Church to pass into the other with scarcely any perceptible change in practice or difference in doctrine.

The relations were most cordial and steps were taken to strengthen the bonds of amity so that they might use each other's church buildings, and there was free admission of members of the one into the class-meetings, the prayer-meetings, and the love-feasts of the other.

Martin Boehm, co-founder with Otterbein of the United Brethren, fraternized with preachers and people of the Methodist Episcopal Church so that he could have passed as one of them, and, when he was seventy-six or seventy-seven years of age, he had his name placed upon a Methodist Episcopal class-book at Boehm's Chapel near which he resided. The chapel stood on ground which once was part of his own homestead and which later had belonged to his son Jacob, who was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

In regard to this Bishop Boehm said: "Age having overtaken me, with some of its infirmities, I could not travel as I had formerly done. In 1802 I enrolled my name on a Methodist class-book, and I have found great comfort in meeting with my brethren."

This, it is held, did not mean that he had left the United Brethren, for it is shown that he presided in the United Brethren Conference in 1805 when he was elected superintendent or bishop a second time, and he was present at the Conference of 1809.

This was his last Conference for he then was eighty-three years of age. About three years later, on the 23d of March, 1812, Martin Boehm died, aged eighty-six years, three months, and eleven days, after a ministry of fifty-three years, and his honored remains were laid in the ground on which he had lived beside Boehm's Chapel, in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, which venerable edifice still stands a monument to Boehm and an evidence of the close relationship between the United Brethren and the Methodist Episcopal Church in those days.

Bishop Boehm's son, Henry Boehm, who had been a

United Brethren preacher, joined the Methodist Episcopal Church and entered its ministry, as Doctor Berger says: "On account of the greater thoroughness of its organization, especially as to its more elaborate discipline and the efficiency of its itinerant system." He was the long time travelling companion of Bishop Asbury. He lived to a great old age, dying on the 29th of December, 1875, aged one hundred years, six months, and twenty-one days, having been a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church for seventy-seven years.

Bishop Otterbein presided over his Conference for the last time in May, 1805. On the 2d of October, 1813, he ordained a minister "with the assistance of William Ryland," an elder of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The next month, on the 17th of November, 1813, Bishop Philip William Otterbein died, aged eighty-seven years, five months, and fourteen days, after sixty-five years in the ministry. At his funeral service three ministers officiated, one from the Lutheran Church, another from the Protestant Episcopal Church, and the third was the Reverend William Ryland of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Bishop Asbury, who had preached a sermon on the death of Bishop Martin Boehm, now preached a special sermon on the decease of Bishop Otterbein. In his discourse on Martin Boehm, Asbury said: "William Otterbein was regularly ordained to the ministry in the German Presbyterian Church. He is one of the best scholars and greatest divines in America. Why, then, is he not where he began? He was irregular. Alas for us! the zealous are necessarily so to those whose cry has been, 'Put me into the priest's office, that I may eat a morsel of bread.' . . . Such was not

Boehm; such is not Otterbein; and now his sun is setting in brightness. Behold the saint of God leaning upon his staff, waiting for the chariots of Israel!"

After preaching his sermon on Otterbein, which was delivered in the church of the deceased minister, Asbury wrote in his journal:

"By request I discoursed on the character of the angel of the Church of Philadelphia, in allusion to P. W. Otterbein, the holy, the great Otterbein, whose funeral discourse it was intended to be. Solemnity marked the silent meeting in the German Church, where were assembled the members of our Conference and many of the clergy of the city. Forty years have I known the retiring modesty of this man of God, towering majestic above his fellows in learning, wisdom, and grace, yet seeking to be known only of God and the people of God."

The Church of the United Brethren in Christ spread, and increased in numbers and influence, for nearly three generations without a break, but at last serious differences developed, and in it was repeated an experience that has come to many other ecclesiastical bodies.

The years 1885 and 1889 mark an era in the history of this Church. In the General Conference of 1885 steps were taken to revise the Confession of Faith and to prepare an amended Constitution and a commission for this purpose was created. The revisions having been made, the documents were submitted to the people of the Church. Various modifications and additions were involved which called forth considerable opposition and, among other things, there was dissent from the changes in the rule in regard to secret societies which was modified so as to make it less stringent.

When the General Conference of 1889 met in the city of York, Pennsylvania, and the votes were counted it was found that the revisions had received two-thirds of all the votes cast. Then the bishops, on the 13th of May, formally said to the General Conference and the Church that: "The result being the required two-thirds, we do hereby publish and proclaim the document thus voted upon to be the Confession of Faith and Constitution of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, and we hereby pass from under the old and legislate under the amended Constitution."

This proclamation having been made, Bishop Milton Wright, with fourteen others of the twenty who in the General Conference had voted against approval, arose and left the hall and went to another place in the city of York, and proceeded to organize themselves, asserting that they were the true General Conference because of certain irregularities and illegalities in connection with the actions on the revision. Having organized they elected bishops and other officers and transacted such business as they deemed necessary.

As they adhered to the documents as they were before the proposed revision this body became known as "The Church of the United Brethren in Christ (Old Constitution)."

This division was followed by a period of litigation through which the Church of the Old Constitution endeavored to establish its claim in the courts that it was the real Church of the United Brethren in Christ. It was claimed for and by it that the revision had not received the requisite vote because so many in the Church had not voted at all. It sought possession of the United Brethren Publishing House claiming that the section

that had accepted the revised Confession of Faith and the new Constitution had ceased to be the true Church of the United Brethren in Christ and had become another and a different Church and that doctrinally, for example, it had ceased to be Arminian and had become Calvinistic, and that the minority General Conference was the rightful representative of the real Church. The courts, however, left the majority in possession. Claims were made to other property also but the courts did not disturb the holders thereof.

At the beginning the Church of the Old Constitution had a membership of between fifteen and twenty thousand. While there are variations, the two Churches are regarded as essentially the same and both bodies are very similar to the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Some time ago there was talk of combining the Congregationalists, the Methodist Protestants, and the United Brethren in Christ but the negotiations failed. More recently there was a movement to unite the Methodist Protestants and the United Brethren and both General Conferences declared in its favor but Annual Conferences in both bodies were opposed and it was believed that a two-thirds vote of the people could not be secured for the combination. The movement is now regarded as having lost its force. Suggestions have been made looking towards a union of the United Brethren and the Methodist Episcopal Churches but as yet nothing has resulted.

Another Methodistic and Episcopal body which at first appealed especially to Germans and persons of German descent in America came quite directly from the Methodist Episcopal Church.

When it arose the Methodist Episcopal Church had

no special department of German work, and the new denomination began because there had developed a feeling that the German people should be cared for specially by themselves and in their own tongue.

This other Evangelistic and Methodistic movement among the Germanic people in the United States had its beginning in Eastern Pennsylvania where there were large German populations.

In the eighteenth century a Lutheran family named Albrecht emigrated from Germany and settled in this part of Pennsylvania. To these parents a son was born on the first day of May, in the year 1759, near Pottstown, Montgomery County, in that state, and this son was called Jacob—Jacob Albrecht—but the name soon was Americanized, and he became known as Jacob Albright.

This Jacob Albright removed to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where he prospered as a manufacturer of tiles and brick. While there, the death of several of his children in rapid succession in 1790 profoundly impressed him, and it is related that a sermon in connection with the funeral services led him to repentance, and, soon after, he was spiritually changed. One account states that he was converted under the preaching of an independent minister named Reagel.

After his penitence and conversion, though he had been trained a Lutheran, Mr. Jacob Albright joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, in which, on account of his devotion and his gifts in address, he was made a licensed exhorter, and so had authority to hold devotional meetings and to deliver religious discourses.

As already stated the Methodist Episcopal Church at that time conducted no distinctive work among the German population, but Mr. Albright, who spoke Ger-

man, and, indeed, "had little knowledge of the English language," [1] having become deeply interested in the religious condition of his fellow Germans, and recognizing the general decline of religious life and the corruption of doctrines and religious practices that prevailed in the German Churches in his section of the country, undertook to work a reform.

Determined to devote himself to the German-speaking people, of whom there were many in the eastern and central parts of the State of Pennsylvania, he began holding German services and preaching in 1796. He was under the influence of what he deemed a divine call, and so to more efficiently prosecute what he believed was his special mission of working a religious reform among the Pennsylvania Germans, he gave up his business and devoted himself to evangelistic efforts.

He travelled throughout a considerable part of the country preaching the Gospel wherever he had opportunity, in churches, schoolhouses, private homes, on public roads, and wherever he could reach the people. At first he had no thought of founding a denomination, but, being urged to organize his converts, he formed classes and gathered congregations, and by 1800 a number of societies existed and, as they multiplied, regular helpers were raised up, a district was formed, and Mr. Albright became its head, and so 1800 has been regarded as the epochal year of the organization.

The first general gathering or council took place in November, 1803. It was composed of Mr. Albright, his two assistants and fourteen of the leading men. This Conference unanimously recognized Albright as a minister of the Gospel—"a genuine evangelical

[1] Doctor Berger, "History of United Brethren," p. 193.

preacher"—and as such solemnly ordained him by the laying on of hands as in the Acts of the Apostles xiii. 1–3.

In 1807 the first regular Conference was held in Kleinfeltersville, Pennsylvania. It was composed of twenty-eight ministers and officers of the Association, and this body elected the Reverend Jacob Albright a general superintendent or bishop, and authorized him to compile a Scriptural creed and to draw up a plan of organization or church discipline. Thus in Eastern Pennsylvania there developed a distinct denomination among the German-speaking population.

Bishop Albright saw the culmination of his efforts when the societies he had formed were combined into a new Church, but he did not remain long to enjoy the fruits of his labors, for about six months after he was made bishop he passed from labor to reward. He died May 18, 1808, at Mühlbach, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania.

He was a plain man with a plain education, but he was characterized by deep piety, unfailing devotion to his work, and intense earnestness, and he was highly esteemed by Bishop Asbury.

On account of the name of the founder of this new denomination its people were called Albright Methodists, the Albrights, or Albright's People—*Die Albrecht's Leute*. A certificate of ordination issued by Bishop Albright in 1807 shows that his followers at that time were known as "New Methodists." Dr. R. Yeakel, in his history, referring to the Conference of 1807, says: "This Conference gave the Church it represented no distinct name. . . . But the Conference adopted a Conference name by calling itself 'The Newly-Formed

Methodist Conference.' Albright had been a Methodist, and was such still in his heart, faith, and practice. If he had been allowed to fulfill his mission to the Germans within the Methodist Church, he would have remained in that Church." [1]

Though the founder had been removed, men had been raised up to carry on the work. Prominent among them were George Miller, an excellent writer; John Walter, an eloquent preacher; and John Dreisbach, a leader and organizer, and these men built on the foundations Albright had laid.

In 1809 a second Conference was held, at which the Book of Discipline, begun by Bishop Albright and completed by George Miller, was adopted, and the name agreed upon was "The So-called Albright People."

In 1816 the first General Conference was held in Union County, Pennsylvania. This was composed of all the elders in the ministry of the Church. It adopted as the name of the organization "The Evangelical Association," which is its proper appellation at the present time.

The Evangelical Association has a polity quite like that of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and its first Discipline was mainly a translation into German of the Book of Discipline of that Church. Though it does not use the title, it is episcopal and has bishops. It is Arminian in doctrine, connectional in organization, and episcopal in government, with a General Conference which meets once in four years, while in worship and usages it is Methodistic, and generally resembles the

[1] Dr. R. Yeakel, "History of the Evangelical Association," pp. 84, 85.

Methodist Episcopal Church to which Albright had belonged.

This body also has shared in the disruptive experiences of other ecclesiastical organizations, and from the Evangelical Association there went out ministers and members who formed another independent Church.

This was preceded by controversies of several years' duration touching differences of opinion largely as to matters of administration and the power of the General Conference. "In 1887 the General Conference assumed original jurisdiction in the case of an accused brother, and proceeded to try him in a manner which called forth the most earnest protestations from many of its members," it was alleged, and the Church was resolved into two parties termed the "Majority" and the "Minority." Certain bishops were involved in the controversies and in actions which grew out of them. It was asserted that "Ministers were suspended without charges or trial," and that "Proceedings and verdicts of properly constituted tribunals were, without a shadow of warrant under the law, declared void." Differences in the interpretation of the Discipline resulted in calling two General Conferences in 1891, the "Majority" meeting in Indianapolis, and the "Minority" in Philadelphia. The "Minority" proposed an arbitration by "disinterested Christian brethren of other denominations" but this was not accepted. Litigation was resorted to and the courts ruled against the "Minority." Then in October, 1894, members of the East Pennsylvania Conference met in convention and reorganized as the East Pennsylvania Conference of the United Evangelical Church, and issued a call for a General Conference to meet in Naperville, Illinois, on the 29th of Novem-

ber, of the same year, and there, on the thirtieth day of November, 1894, organized the United Evangelical Church, with fifty-five thousand members.

Some modifications have been made in the old economy but the similarities between the two bodies still are very marked, and there has been a recent movement to reunite the two and make them one Church.

All these bodies which had a German origin now use English as well as German in their services, while, on the other hand, the Methodist Episcopal Church has an exceedingly extensive German work in the United States of America, with whole Conferences for German preachers and people.

Some of these modifications are likely to strengthen the fraternizing spirit and to result in closer relations between the several bodies.

XXXIV

IS UNION OF THE DENOMINATIONS DESIRABLE?

IS the organic unity of the separate and different denominations desirable or necessary? That is a fundamental question. If it is not necessary or desirable then it is a matter of little or no moment, but if it is a duty, or even if it is desirable, then it is a question demanding serious consideration.

Being a current question it demands attention, and, to-day, it is receiving much attention and, in some instances, possibly more attention than it deserves.

Probably the most who discuss the matter consider merely the question of denominational union in the abstract, on the general assertion that there are too many denominations, rather than the concrete question as to union between two or more denominations in particular. But the question is not to be determined in the abstract but in the concrete as between two or more bodies.

If one asks: Is general Church unity necessary, and is it a divine duty to bring all denominations together as one organism and under a single ecclesiastical government? the student of Church history will probably answer in the negative.

But one may say did not Jesus pray: "That they all may be one" and that the disciples "may be perfected in one"? He certainly did, but did He mean the organic unity of different denominations, and is the eccle-

siastical combination of all under one government the only possible oneness and the only possible oneness Jesus meant? Is there not the "unity of the Spirit" and may not persons having the "unity of the Spirit" be one, though they are under different varieties of Church government with variations in ecclesiastical usage? The "unity of the Spirit" is one thing and ecclesiastical unity is another.

So when one asks: Is Church unity necessary? the answer must be that Denominational unity is not always absolutely necessary. To the other question, Is organic unity desirable? the answer must be that the organic unity of denominations may, or may not, be desirable, and that is to be determined, not by abstract theorizings but by actual circumstances.

Adherents of Protestantism that broke away from the Church of Rome certainly would not hold that there should be organic unity under all circumstances, and no genuine Protestant would want to unite Protestantism with the Papal organization, and, logically, no Protestant would hold that all existing Churches should be united into a single body and that all Christians must be under one ecclesiastical government.

Speaking generally, under present conditions, the absolute unity of all Churches is not required, and yet there may be denominations that could consolidate and would do well to unite.

Union, however, should not be simply for union, or merely for bigness, but for something beyond and better than mere combination. Those who contemplate a consolidation with another Church should ask: Will things be better? Will we combined do better work?

If things will be worse, then it would be a crime to

combine. If they will be no better, then there is no advantage in the consolidation and the proposed union is not necessary. If things will not be better, or not much better, then what is the use of the trouble, the effort, and the risk involved in the suggested change? If there is little or nothing to be gained by a combination there is, probably, much to be lost and Churches should consider these things.

If two denominations are exactly alike and belong to the same ecclesiastical family it would seem that a question as to union between them should be answered in the affirmative, but the fundamental fact of exact sameness should first be ascertained.

If they are exactly alike how did they ever separate, and why have they remained separate so many years? The fact that they separated and have continued apart so long starts a suspicion that they cannot be exactly the same, or quite as much alike as some would like to think.

Nevertheless these differences might disappear and, under some circumstances, a harmonious union might result.

Even the strongest friend of union must scrutinize and challenge propositions for union, until he is thoroughly satisfied that it is perfectly safe, for matters easily overlooked might forbid a union or might make it a mere formality on paper and not a real unification in spirit.

Combinations under some conditions would be exceedingly unfortunate, and either side has a right to ask, What will be the effect of bringing in people of another and adverse kind to rule in whole or part?

The removal of friction between two kindred de-

nominations is to be desired, but would the spirit that feeds friction be removed by uniting the antagonists? If there is friction and one Church is suspicious or antagonistic towards a sister Church, there would seem to be little probability of union, and, if the same feelings are carried into a combination between them, there might be no real unity of spirit though there was an external union. Then the friction would be within rather than without. But friction may be removed without organic unity and it should be removed before organic union is attempted.

During the course of a generation or two of separation, denominations which are historically or theoretically similar may diverge and suffer many decided differences so that they are not precisely the same as they were at the beginning. They have had a different history and have stood for different things. Changes in both have occurred in polity and in other things so that they are not ecclesiastically the same, and in the same way practical methods are no longer exactly the same, and it is just possible that there have grown up differences of a theological nature.

All these things of history and of time-development have not been forgotten, and an attachment to variations has grown. If they persist, even in sentiment, they would not strongly cement a union, and they would not make for union of sentiment or for unity of spirit. If antagonistic sentiments are brought in they will not tend to real harmony. Some of these things may not be vital, but, essential or non-essential, they should be essentially eliminated before the proposed union is consummated; for the mere form of voting union is not enough to make heart unity.

Doubtless more is expected of organic unity than the theorists are likely to realize. They think it will forever remove many evils and there will be a practically perfect ecclesiasticism. But they forget that when in the middle ages Christendom was supposed to be under a single government, corruption was rampant and despotism ran wild.

Further a unified ecclesiastical government may not mean a complete unity. Even to-day the Roman Church has its divisions within itself, and Mohammedanism has its sects.

So some strong assertions frequently made in favor of Church union are not well-founded. Thus it is said that the organic union of two denominations would prevent the duplication of Churches and various institutions and enterprises, but this is not a certain prevention of duplication, for where there is only one denomination there are duplications that some call unnecessary, and there are rival and antagonistic Churches in the same denomination. Unity does not prevent this and the lack of unity is not the cause. These things usually grow out of local ambitions, differences in judgment, and other conditions which might not be affected or prevented by ecclesiastical oneness.

Neither is organic unity a certain preventive of local jealousies and antagonisms, for they are found where there is only a single denomination and no competing denominations.

It is said that unity will be more economical because there will be fewer churches and fewer ministers will be needed. Then what will become of the surplus ministers? Will they be discharged and where will they go to get work and support? If there are too many

preachers why are the Churches continually crying out for more? Again, how many church buildings could be abandoned? Perhaps a few here and there would be given up, but how many could be abandoned when even now there are not enough church edifices to accommodate the population? If there are not too many churches even a combined body would need them all.

If churches of one or other sister denomination are not needed in the same locality a little fraternal common sense can adjust that. Whether they are needed is a matter of opinion and the people themselves can find out whether they are wanted and whether they can carry them.

A few facts like these very plainly show that organic unity may not bring all that some advocates seem to anticipate.

The law of supply and demand naturally regulates in the business world, and it is so with Churches, and if left alone a Church will prove its right to exist or its duty to desist. It depends upon the people and their ecclesiastical officers whether there is one church or two or more competing churches. The great factor is intelligence joined with love for the interests of Christ's kingdom, and, if there is not good judgment and common sense in two or more denominations, there might not be with the same people consolidated into a single denomination.

The greatest requisite is the unity of the Christly Spirit, and the unity of the Spirit in the practical conduct of the people and of the organized denominations. Centralization within one ecclesiastical government does not give that, but it may exist either in a union of Churches or amid diverse denominations, so that there

can be mutual comity, common sense, and Christly consideration among the denominations without the loss of individual freedom or denominational existence in a fusion or organic union.

Nevertheless there is a power in the concentration of small bodies into one large body, but the extremist is apt to overlook the fact that denominational divisions have a decided value, and the denomination is not to be discounted because it is regarded as a division.

Division in other departments is regarded as an advantage and so efficiency experts favor specialization and division of labor, and the same principle may apply to Church work. One denomination holds one thing and works in one way, and another denomination devotes itself to another particular and works in another way. So one denomination checks another, and different denominations stimulate each other.

Denominations have their place and yet, in instances, they may be unnecessary, and the question as to the reduction of the number is a proper one for consideration. Perhaps some should cease, perhaps some should combine with other Churches, but these things are to be determined not by some abstract theory of the duty of all denominations to unite in a single Church but by practical conditions and natural relationships, and by actual needs and advantages, and each case must be decided on its own merits.

XXXV

THE DIFFICULTIES

IT is one thing to favor organic unity in the abstract, but a very different thing to favor a particular plan of union. The general principle might be admitted, but the working out of details has deterred the most enthusiastic.

Thus some of the strongest advocates of denominational union have been brought to a sudden halt by a new view of a merely superficial point, and to a dead halt by unsuspected difficulties which have suddenly developed.

In the consideration and in the negotiations there are two sides and two views. Each side must be thoroughly honest and must not betray the trust committed to it, and, though neither side may be suspicious, each one feels it must be cautious, so as to fairly protect the interests of its own Church.

Sometimes union is not possible, when each side remains true to its denominational principles, under some circumstances, but even when unification is feasible it is seldom easy.

At a given time, or in a particular case, there may be insuperable difficulties that, for the time being, at least, will make unification absolutely impossible, and often there may be such difficulties, that, though there is the sincerest desire on both sides for unity, it will be necessary to postpone negotiations, perhaps, indefinitely or for a long time.

Observation and test show that it is a great mistake to imagine that the unifying of two denominations is an easy task. It has often been seen that it is difficult to combine two local churches of the same denomination. If so, it must be much more difficult to unite two denominations and make them truly one.

That the difficulties are very real has been demonstrated by the fact that there have been very few, if any, complete unions or reunions in American Methodism, notwithstanding there have been very earnest efforts to bring about unification. Indeed, as a matter of fact, no complete union has really been consummated between any of the Methodistic divisions, unless the reunion of the Methodist Protestants be regarded as an exception, but in that case there had been no very radical separation, for, at the time, it was declared to be temporary or conditional, until relieved from connection with slavery, and it would seem that even then the union did not embrace all.

That difficulties have been actually experienced in the attempted union of Methodistic bodies may be quickly seen by those who are familiar with the history. Thus a branch of the Methodist Protestants and the Wesleyan body that withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church actually voted and began a combination which never became a complete union, for some stood out and never combined. Then the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada was supposed by Conference action to have united with the British Wesleyans of Canada, but parties who denied the right of the Conference to pass the people over bodily continued the Canadian Methodist Episcopal Church for many years.

The most conspicuous illustration of difficulties in the

way of union is in the case of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. For fifty years, beginning with 1865, efforts have been made to unite these two Churches and yet the union has not yet taken place, and the same is true with efforts to unite the Methodist Protestant Church with one, and with both, of these bodies.

A noticeable fact is that they have continued in separation longer than they were originally together.

Now, in 1915, the Methodist Protestant Church has been separated from the Methodist Episcopal Church for about eighty-eight years, and, so to speak, those who formed it had been in the Methodist Episcopal Church only forty-four or forty-five years, that is to say from the time the original Church was organized. In other words the Methodist Protestants have been out of the Church nearly twice as long as they had been a part of the Methodist Episcopal Church, or nearly twice as long as the age of the original Church when they withdrew.

Turning to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, it will be seen that it has been separated from the Methodist Episcopal Church about seventy-one years, or from 1845 to 1915, while, so to speak, its founders were in the Methodist Episcopal Church only sixty-one or sixty-two years, that is to say from 1784 to 1845. So that it has been separated, it might be said, longer than its people were a part of the original Church.

This continued continuance of these divisions has been one of the serious difficulties in the way of reunion, for as the years of separation go on the divergencies tend to increase.

That it is a difficult thing to unite denominations,

and even those that have had a kindred origin and that preserve similar characteristics, is shown in the case of the two colored Episcopal Methodist denominations, the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, that became independent early in the nineteenth century. These Churches began to talk about uniting fifty-one years ago, and they have talked off and on ever since, and still they are not one, but two, as they have been for about a hundred years.

It is also remarkable that up to the present time no denomination that went out of the Methodist Episcopal Church has ever returned to this "Mother Church." What the future may bring about remains to be seen.

These difficulties in the way of union, however, are not peculiar to Methodistic bodies. The Methodist Protestant and the United Brethren Churches voted to unite several years ago but difficulties developed and the union has not yet been consummated. So the Presbyterian Church and the Cumberland Presbyterians voted to unite, and it was decreed that the union had taken place, but there has been much litigation, and still everything has not been settled and some who belonged to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church still are outstanding and resist the union. The Presbyterians and the Southern Presbyterians have not yet succeeded in uniting, and the Baptists have not reunited with the Southern Convention Baptists. Other bodies also have had similar experiences.

The difficulties in the way of ecclesiastical union have their roots in various things. Thus there are differences in teaching and in habits of thought. The

people, even in similar Churches, have a different way of looking at questions and a different way of thinking, and in matters of practical action they have different ways of doing things.

There may be doctrinal difficulties even where in the main there is general agreement. There may be serious differences on features of Church polity. Particularly, and frequently, difficulties are related to property questions, bequests, educational endowments, and trust funds. These were intended for a specific denomination and cannot be alienated from their purpose, and the inviolability of contract must be recognized.

There may be a property trust to be used by a particular Church, and by no other, and to be used by it under conditions that existed with it as a separate body, and which could not be transferred to another or different body, and the question might arise, in the case of a fusion with another denomination, whether the fusion did not make a new and different body in such a sense that it would have no valid claim upon the fund, the real estate, or other property. If this were so then the property would be imperilled and might be claimed by a very small minority who did not go out, or go into the combination, and who claim to represent, and to be, the old Church.

All these questions must be considered, and should be legally worked out, before there is a decision for union.

There is always the difficulty that grows out of attachment to one's old Church and the Church of one's fathers, and a repugnance to the obliteration of venerable peculiarities. So most people would be opposed to combination if through it would come something

radically different from, and not as pleasing as they had in their old Church. Hence, if union will destroy the characteristics of one or the other Church, that should be distinctly understood, as it would prevent a unified spirit, and if it would have as its outcome the destruction of what had been regarded as essential, doubtless many would not only not favor, but would actively oppose the unification.

If there is something to be gained, there may be something to be lost. If there is something to be acquired, there may be something to be given up. These things should be tabulated and scrutinized, and then the Churches must strike a balance before they can determine whether the proposed union will pay materially, numerically, historically, spiritually, and effectively.

Even under fairly favorable conditions difficulties of some kind are likely to appear, but, if the union is clearly one that should be brought about, a way may be found for its consummation, and where denominations are closely akin it would seem possible, and, on general principles, desirable to bring about a unification.

XXXVI

THE DUTY OF THE CHURCHES

IN a general sense, and on general principles, union is possible between two Christian denominations, and particularly between those that have a common origin and have the same doctrines and polity.

If the spirit of fraternity has been duly cultivated so that both Churches feel that they are really one except in the legal form of consolidation, then what was a possibility becomes a strong probability, and, unless there are insurmountable legal or other difficulties in the way, the union is likely to take place.

On the other hand if there is not real fraternity and a genuine sense of oneness, a real unification is not likely to ensue, no matter how ambitious may be the leaders to bring it about, and no matter how able may be the lawyers who think they can remove the legal obstacles.

An enforced marriage is not likely to be a happy one, and, if the hearts have not come together, it would be a crime to marry the parties. The same is true as to the marriage of two Churches. There must be the preliminary preparation of thought, interest and feeling.

That may require time but the time had better be taken than that a mistake be made, for a hasty marriage is about as bad as an enforced one.

The consolidation of two denominations involves so

much that it is better to make haste slowly than to rush into an agreement that will be followed by prolonged regret. If there is no joy in the anticipation of union the matter better be delayed indefinitely.

Delay, however, may not be in the way of real progress, but may really accelerate the happy consummation.

In the meantime the denominations concerned have a duty to perform—a duty as to their own denomination, and a duty towards the other denomination or denominations.

The first thing is for each denomination to go on with its own work and to look after its own interests as though no consolidation would take place. It is bad policy to assume the certainty of a contingency. The combination may never take place and, therefore, to neglect one's own interests might prove to be a costly error. Too much apparent anxiety for union may defeat itself, as the over-earnest suitor may repel rather than attract. A denomination that goes on aggressively with its own work, as though it did not have to combine, but can get along by itself, is more likely to attract the other denomination than if it allowed its interests to deteriorate on the supposition that the other denomination was certain to combine with it.

On the other hand sheer selfishness is not a winning quality. While each denomination is under obligation to carry on its own work, it should be considerate of others and develop the fraternal spirit. If there are bitter antagonisms now, and that spirit is carried into the new ecclesiastical combination, it would not mean a real unification.

There is, however, no necessity for such antagonism,

but the two denominations, though operating in the same town, should cultivate the spirit of Christian fraternity, first, because that is right, and, secondly, because they are looking forward to a legal oneness. In this way they make a Christian present, and prepare for an immediate, and a permanent future in the unity of the Spirit.

There is no reason why two denominations working in the same place should not work together in peace. If they do not there is little hope of organic union.

The denominations should be friendly, fraternal, Christly, considerate, patient, and mutually helpful. In this way as each denomination generously recognizes the rights of the others, union, if proper and desirable, will come spontaneously and the combining Churches will be truly one.

XXXVII

STATISTICS OF METHODISTIC BODIES IN 1914

(In the United States Only)

THESE are from the figures gathered and arranged by H. K. Carroll, LL. D., for years in charge of the United States Census of the Churches.

Denominations	*Ministers*	*Churches*	*Communicants*
1. Methodist Episcopal,	18,881	28,245	3,603,265
2. Union American Methodist Episcopal,*	170	212	19,000
3. African Methodist Episcopal,*	5,000	6,000	620,000
4. African Union Methodist Protestant,*	200	125	4,000
5. African Methodist Episcopal Zion,*	3,552	3,180	568,608
6. Methodist Protestant,	1,371	2,348	180,382
7. Wesleyan Methodist,	840	675	19,500
8. Methodist Episcopal, South,	7,099	16,691	2,005,707
9. Congregational Methodist,	337	333	15,529
10. New Congregational Methodist,†	59	35	1,782
11. Zion Union Apostolic,* †	33	45	3,059
12. Colored Methodist Episcopal,	3,072	3,196	240.798
13. Primitive,	70	92	8,210
14. Free Methodist,	1,199	1,179	33,828
15. Reformed Methodist Union Episcopal,*	40	58	4,000
16. Independent Methodist,	2	2	1,161
Totals,	41,925	62,416	7,328,829

* Colored Churches. † Census for 1906.

OTHER BODIES METHODISTIC IN DOCTRINES AND POLITY

Denominations	*Ministers*	*Churches*	*Communicants*
United Brethren,	1,953	3,583	322,044
United Brethren (Old Constitution),	307	503	20,972
Total United Brethren,	2,260	4,086	343,016
Evangelical Association,	1,031	1,663	115,243
United Evangelical Church,	538	935	75,050
Total Evangelicals,	1,569	2,598	190,293

Adding the communicants of the United Brethren and Evangelical Churches to the total of those who bear the Methodistic title, would make a total membership of 7,862,138 in the United States of America alone.

In addition to the statistical tables, the following is condensed from the "Methodist Year Book," for 1915:

In 1910, the Independent Methodist Episcopal Church of America, and the Free Will Methodist Episcopal Church were consolidated, the latter title remaining. These are colored Churches.

The Congregational Methodist Church was organized in the South, in 1852. It has 196 churches, 220 ministers, and 10,969 members.

The Congregational Methodist Church, North, is reported to have 8 churches, 12 ministers, and 1,000 members.

The Primitive Methodist Church of America was reported as having 97 churches, 77 ministers, and 7,295 members.

The British Methodist Episcopal Church (colored) of Canada was said to have 20 churches, 18 ministers, 12 local preachers, and 685 members.

The Methodist Church of Canada was reported in 1914 as having 2,869 ministers, and 368,992 members.

In 1911, Methodism in Canada was calculated as having 14.99 per cent. of the population.

To this should be added the fact that for some years in Canada there has been an effort to unite the Presbyterian, the Congregational, and the Methodist Churches, but, though representative bodies have favored the project, difficulties continue. Some, it is said, have declared that if the union is made they will not enter it, but will claim the property.

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